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WOMAN:

HER MISSION AND LIFE.

BY ADOLPHE MONOD, D.D.

NEW YORK:
AMERICAN S. S. COMPANY.

WOMAN:

HER MISSION AND LIFE.

BY ADOLPHE MONOD, D.D.

LATE MINISTER IN PARIS, FRANCE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

With a Biographical Sketch of the Author, and a Portrait from Steel

"THEY WHO ROCK THE CRADLE RULE THE WORLD."

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TO THE

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA,

THIS PRECIOUS LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS TREASURE,

FROM ONE OF THE MOST GIFTED MINDS OF THE AGE,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

So Woman, born to dignify retreat,
Unknown to flourish, and unseen be great,
To give domestic life its sweetest charm,
With softness polish, and with virtue warm,
Fearful of fame, unwilling to be known,
Should seek but Heaven's applauses and her own.

Hannah More

PREFACE.

"WHAT is wanting," said Napoleon, "that the youth of France be well educated?" "MOTHERS!" replied Madame Campan. This reply struck the Emperor. "*Here*," said he, "is a system of *education in one word.* Be it your care to train up mothers who shall know how to educate their children."

With this sentiment, the lamented author of the following pages most heartily agreed. Believing it, and determining to do *his* part in giving a right bent to those who are shaping others, he made the Life and Mission of Woman a matter of patient and profound investigation; and the result of this investigation we have before us. Few men, it is confidently affirmed, have penetrated deeper into the very heart of this great subject; and a more comprehensive, able and *practical* discussion of the subject will not be found.

A chief excellence of this treatise is its *scripturalness.* Dr. Monod interrogated the BIBLE as to the question of Woman's proper Mission and Life; and he found its light, here as elsewhere, clear and sufficient.

"I resolved," says he, "to open the Bible, to listen to it, and to allow myself to be guided by it; and I have been confounded at finding there, instead of some thoughts scattered throughout forty books and nineteen centuries, an entire doctrine, developing itself

from book to book and from age to age, passing from the hand of prophet to apostle, as a work planned by one workman and transmitted by him to another to complete; a doctrine whose mission, plenitude, clearness, simplicity, brilliant in the midst of an ignorance profound and universal, excited in me a surprise which grew with meditation. For all this revealed itself to me by degrees; the place assigned to Woman in Scripture, limited at the first glance, continually enlarged itself before me. We must *seek* for Woman in Scripture; but once found, she appears there clothed with a ministry as beneficent as glorious. Her position there instructed me: I learned that such as she is in this book, she ought to be in life—great, but hidden. I say it boldly: of all religions and all systems, Scripture alone has known and understood Woman."

At a time like the present, when, among us, the vocation and "rights" of Woman are much discussed, and extreme opinions are urged in both directions, the introduction of Dr. Monod's noble thoughts to our people, by means of a translation, can be neither inopportune nor without profit. They have passed through several editions in France, but have not, so far as is known, been presented until now in an English dress. Appearing, in the original, as pulpit productions, two or three insignificant changes in the phraseology have been made to suit their present form.

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ADOLPHE MONOD, D. D

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

Dr. Monod * was a son of the late Rev. John Monod, of Paris. He had seven brothers and three sisters, all of whom, it is believed, survive him. Three of his brothers are in the ministry of the gospel—all evangelical, faithful, and most highly esteemed brethren. The oldest is the Rev. Dr. Frederic Monod, who is pastor of one of the churches in Paris, connected with the Free Church of France. The Rev. William Monod, another brother, is now pastor of a Protestant Church in Paris. The youngest brother is the Rev. Horace Monod, one of the French pastors at Marseilles.

Dr. Adolphe Monod, as well as his brothers, was educated mainly at home, under private teachers and professors, and then, according to the liberal practice which prevails in France, he underwent an examination in one of the colleges of Paris, and, paying the usual fees, received his diploma as Bachelor of Letters. His theological studies, we believe, were pursued in Geneva, in the Theological department of the Academy (or University, as we should call it) of that city. For two or three years he preached to a French congregation at Naples, holding the post of chaplain to the Embassy of Prussia. From that city he was called to be one of the pastors of the National Protestant Church in Lyons, in France, when his great pulpit talents soon made him widely known. He was even chosen president of the consistory of that church.

But he had not long been settled in the church in Lyons, before his mind was led by the grace and Spirit of God to embrace heartily the evangelical system. As soon as he had clearly apprehended Christ as the Son of God, as well as the Son of Man—as the only Mediator

* Pronounced as if the *d* were lost: thus, Mono.

between God and man—his preaching began to partake of the glorious change. At first, and for a while, the rich and worldly church of Lyons, to which he (with two other pastors, men of a very different spirit) ministered, were astonished. Soon dissatisfaction with truth began to manifest itself, and in a few months the distinguished but humble servant of Christ was compelled to resign his place, and open an independent chapel, on truly evangelical principles. About seventy people, mostly poor but pious persons, followed him. He commenced his labors in a large room in the third story of a private house. Soon it was filled to overflowing. It was again and again enlarged, until it held nearly four hundred people. As it could be enlarged no more, it was resolved to build a chapel or church in a more central part of the city.

From Lyons, Dr. Monod was called, in 1836, to the Theological Seminary at Montauban, where he became Professor of Sacred Eloquence. This appointment he received from the hands of Baron Pétit, a Protestant nobleman of evangelical sentiments, who was for a considerable period Minister of Public Instruction in the reign of Louis Philippe. For several years Dr. Monod filled with great ability the professorship which he held in the only theological institution of the National Reformed Church of France. During that period he wrote several of his most valuable publications. In his vacations he visited Paris and other important cities, and was always heard, when he preached, by great crowds of people ; or else he made missionary tours in the ancient provinces of Saintonge, Poitou, or other districts in southern and south-western France.

The last seven or eight years of the life of Dr. Adolphe Monod were spent at Paris, where he preached the gospel with great effect, to large and delighted audiences. His labors, and those of Dr. Grandpierre and other distinguished brethren of the same school, have done much to make the evangelical doctrines known and respected among those who attend the churches of the Reformed body in that great and important city.

It was on Sunday, April 16, 1856, that this honored servant of Christ ceased from his labors. His death-bed was one of intense suffering, and, at the same time, of glorious and gracious triumph. In the full and perfect assurance of his salvation through Christ, and in peace, he commended his spirit into the hands of his Heavenly Father. A few days previous to his decease, he was heard to say:

"*My ministerial labors, my works, my preaching, I reckon all as filthy rags; a drop of my Saviour's blood is infinitely more precious.*"

At the time of his death he was not far from fifty-six years of age; and to show how deeply he was beloved among the pious men and women of France, it is only needful to say, that while he lay dying in Paris, in the remotest extremities of the nation the dispersed Protestants were holding circles of prayer for him. French Protestantism universally wept at the news of his death.

As a preacher, it would not be asserting too much to say, that Adolphe Monod occupied the first rank in France. Although not a large man, or a man of commanding appearance, he was nevertheless a prince among preachers. His voice is said to have been melody itself, and ever under perfect control. As to his discourses, those which he delivered in large assemblies were almost invariably prepared with great care, written, and committed to memory. And yet his *extemporaneous*, or rather his *unwritten* sermons or lectures were represented as admirable for beauty of style, for clearness of conception, and for adaptation to the occasion.

Says Dr. Baird, in a letter written several years ago: "I have no hesitation in saying, that Adolphe Monod is the most finished orator I have heard on the Continent. Modest, humble, simple in his appearance and dress, possessing a voice which is music itself, his powerful mind, and vivid but chaste imagination, made their influence felt on the soul of every hearer in a way that is indescribable. The nearest approach to giving a true idea of it would be to say, that his eloquence is of the nature of a *charm* which steals over one, and yet is so subtle that it is not possible to say in what consists its elemental force. It is an eloquence the very opposite of that of the late Dr. Chalmers, which was like a torrent that carries everything away. I have often heard Ravignan, the great Jesuit preacher, in France; and Bautain, by far the best preacher, in my opinion, in the Roman Catholic Church, that I have heard; but they were much inferior to Adolphe Monod. If the late Professor Vinet, of Lausanne," he adds, "was the *Pascal* of the French Protestants in these days (as he certainly was), Dr. Adolphe Monod was their *Bossuet*. But Drs. Vinet and Monod were incomparably superior to Pascal and Bossuet as expounders of evangelical truth, which is, after all, the highest glory of the Christian teacher."

It is well known that the late Abbé Lacordaire, the Dominican,

who was by far the most popular of the Romish priests in France, in his day, remarked to his friends, after hearing him: "We are all children, in comparison with this man." Beside a strong and vivid intellect, what the French call *onction* was the characteristic of Monod's preaching. He was ineffably impressed, himself, with the truth he preached, and the earnestness of his soul thrilled every tone and every gesture.

But great as were Dr. Monod's talents, and fascinating as was his eloquence, these qualities were rivalled by his unfeigned piety, his profound humility, his cordial friendship, his simple and truly Christian manners, the purity of his conversation, and the uniform cheerfulness of his life.

Dr. Monod is said to have left written productions from which several volumes might be formed, that would be equal in beauty of style, in beauty of thought, in force of logic, and vastly superior in true instruction, to anything which Bossuet, Fénélon, Flechiere, or Bourdaloue—the so-called "greats" of the Roman Catholic Church in France—ever wrote. He had published several things of great merit. His Introduction to the French edition of Dr. Hodge's "Commentary on Romans," his "*Lucille*," his "*Femme*" (Woman), his "Controversy with a Romish Priest," at Lyons, his "Lecture on the Delivery of Sermons," etc., are pronounced by a high authority "*perfect* GEMS."*

The accompanying beautiful and striking portrait of Dr. Monod is the only one ever presented to the American public. It has been engraved with great care from one published in Paris some years since, and which is pronounced by those acquainted with Dr. Monod, an admirable likeness.

* Rev. Robert Baird, D.D., to whom indebtedness is acknowledged for many of the above particulars.

THE MISSION OF WOMAN.

My dear Sisters :

If I now address myself particularly to you, the other sex, accustomed to see its name figure at the head of public appeals, will have no cause to be jealous. We are speaking *for man* when we speak *to woman*, endeavoring to sanctify her influence.

Yes, I say her *influence:* for, in refusing to her *authority*, which emanates from the strong over the weak—a necessity in the nature of things—the Creator has assigned to her *influence*, which generally emanates from the weak over the strong ; an influence freely accepted, but accepted on the condition that it should not be manifest.

I hesitate not to say it ; the mightiest influence which exists upon the earth, both for good and for evil, is concealed in the hand of woman. History declares it with me, although the *historian* does not always say it—perhaps because he is ignorant of this secret power, or because he keeps it secret to profit by the self-admiration either of one sex or the other. Let us study the past. Nothing more truly distinguishes the savage state from the civilized, the east from the west, paganism from Christianity, antiquity from the middle ages, the middle ages from modern times, than the condition of woman. Who knows not, for ex-

ample, that the single word polygamy or monogamy determines the manners and destinies of a people? Let us observe what is going on around us. Woman will be found everywhere in the world, as the poet represents Agrippina in the Senate—

"Behind a veil, invisible and present."

As by a woman Satan entered into the innocent race, so shall we generally trace to woman the calamities and crimes which desolate humanity—the hatreds, the revenges, the trials, the suicides, the duels, the murders, and the wars. And as by a woman our Saviour came into the fallen race, so shall we equally trace to woman the thoughts and the works which elevate and bring peace to humanity—the tender devotions, the generous sacrifices, the holy aspirations, the religious institutions, and the public charities. Is it not for this reason that art and poetry, in all ages, have personified the moral powers by *women;* and that the Holy Spirit himself, in the Proverbs, has delineated under the traits of two women the two opposite tendencies which divide the world?*

Imparting to this terrible influence of woman a salutary direction, by studying with her the mission which she has received from God, we shall serve the highest interests of the human race.

By your mission, women who hear me, I understand here the *distinctive* mission of your sex. It has a general one which it shares with ours: to glorify in his representation on the earth the God who created us in his image, and who, seeing this image effaced by sin, has reproduced it in his Son. From this point of view, as "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free," so is there also "neither male nor female; for we are all one in Christ Jesus." But, included in this common mission, which should be the first object of your ambition as well as of

* Compare Prov. vii. and viii.; and ix. 1–12, with ix. 13–18.

ours, there is for you a special mission, adapted to your peculiar endowments. Depend not upon the world to teach you this mission; it has never known it; it is not able to comprehend it; for it has ever reduced the question which concerns you to the meagre proportions of its own self-interest, or your vanity. It remains, then, that we refer it to the word of God; to that word which, mainly occupied, as it shows itself to be, with "the one thing needful," resolves, in passing, all the great problems of humanity; and, uniting example to precept, judges wisely concerning all things, because it judges spiritually.

I open to the first pages of the first book, so well named Genesis, because it reveals the secret of all existences in their wonderful origin, and throws out to us, as if spontaneously, the highest philosophy in primitive acts, recounted with the simplicity of primitive times. There, immediately after those few words, in which God sums up the general mission of humanity, "Let us make man in our image," do we discover another, in which he sums up in like manner the special mission of *woman*, before creating her in her turn: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him." This applies to every woman, not simply to the one who is married; for Eve is not only the wife of the first man, she is also the first woman: and, the representative of all her sex, as Adam is of ours, she presents in herself, as in a sort of miniature, a type of her sex.

Let us start out with this thought which presides at your very birth; and let us take, as our guide in developing it, the inspired oracles of the old and new economy. We shall not be in danger of going astray in a path where God himself has marched before us. And well is it that your own heart will achieve the demonstration, and oblige you to say, while listening to the claims of God's word upon you; yes, this is truly what I ought to be: this is truly what I ought to do.

"It is not good that man should be alone." Loaded with the gifts of God, he still wants something, of which he is him-

self ignorant, or of which he knows nothing except by a vague presentiment ;—a helper "like to himself;" without which life is to him but a solitude, and Eden a desert. Endowed with a nature too communicative to be self-sufficient, he demands a partnership, a support, a complement, and only half lives while he lives alone. Made to think, to talk, to love, his thought is in search of *another* thought, to stimulate it and to reveal it unto itself ; his word dies away in sadness on the air, or awakens a mere echo which does violence to it, rather than responds to it ; and his love knows not where to fasten itself, and, falling back upon himself, threatens to become a devouring self-love. His whole being, in fine, aspires to another self,—but that other self does not exist : "for Adam there was not found a helpmeet." The visible creatures which surround him are too far *below* him ; the invisible Being who has given him life, too far *above* him, to unite their condition to his. *Then*, God formed woman, and the great problem was solved. Behold here, what Adam demanded ; that other self which is himself, and at the same time *not* himself. Woman is a companion whom God has given to man to charm his existence, and to double it by sharing it with another. Her vocation by birth is a vocation of charity.

To this vocation corresponds the *place* which God has assigned to woman. It is not an inferior place : woman is not only a helper for man, but a helper "like to himself."* She ought, then, to march along as his equal, and it is only in this condition that she can bring to him the assistance which he requires. But it is, nevertheless, a secondary and dependent place : for woman was formed after man, made for man, in short, taken from man. This last characteristic speaks volumes to man. Taken from him, "she is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh," and so closely united to him, that he cannot depreciate her without depreciating himself. But at the same time, taken from him,

* This is the rendering of the French for "helpmeet,"—Un aide semblable à lui.—TRANSL.

she owes to him the life which she breathes, and the name which she bears. By what right,—I ought to say with what *heart*,—can she dispute with him the first rank? Her position by birth is a position of humility. A vocation of charity in respect to man, in a position of humility next to man :—*This* is the mission of woman. As to the rest, that vocation and that position, revealed by the same acts, resulting from the same principle, are so inseparable in the formation of woman, that we may include them in the general idea of renunciation, bearing in turn upon self-will and self-glory.

This commentary upon Moses, I have taken from Saint Paul, recalling to the Corinthians the condition of woman, in order to justify his prohibition to her of praying or prophesying with the head uncovered. This subject does not require him to enlarge upon woman's vocation of charity: he merely indicates it in saying "the woman was created for the man."

But observe in what terms he explains her position of humility: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. The man is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." Is not this the doctrine, which I just found in Genesis? But this doctrine the Apostle enforces with a rigor which would be out of place in any other mouth; and for the general idea of dependence at which I pause, *he* substitutes the more precise one of subordination. He concludes from thence that woman ought, "because of the angels" who contemplate what is passing upon the earth, and particularly in the church, "to bear upon her head a mark of the authority" under which she is placed. Man, whose birth formed a part of that great work of creation which inspired the angelic songs of joy, being the image and glory of God, owes it to God to appear with the head lifted up to the view of the whole universe. But woman, whose formation is an event of the second scheme, and, so to speak, of a

family character, being the glory of the man, owes it to him to remain hidden in a comparatively narrow inclosure as a modest spouse in her own home.

The intention of the Apostle is the more marked as the instructions which he gives here are intended for woman in rare cases. For it is only as an exception that a woman can be called to pray or prophesy before men. The order which God has established for a certain end he is free to modify so as the better to gain that end. We sometimes see that in promoting the good of man, a woman is called to depart from the way prescribed to her; it may be to prophecy, as the women of Corinth, as the four daughters of Philip, the deacon, or as the mother of King Lemuel. It may be as Deborah, to judge a people, or even to preside over a mighty expedition. In such cases woman must obey, and she shall be blessed in her obedience: "Blessed above women shall Jael be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent." But then, as ever, aside from what is essential to the extraordinary ministry with which she is clothed, she should remain a woman, according to St. Paul, and, all inspired as she is to caution the man, should remember that she is "the glory of the man," and should withdraw herself from the eyes of the world.

Such being the order of creation, it remains to inquire if the primitive mission of woman was changed by the fall of our race, which disturbed so deeply the work of God. Satan commenced by beguiling the woman, after which he employed her to beguile man; a doubly skillful move, by which he was most sure to succeed with her, because she is weaker than man, and close to man, and because she has greater power over him than he has over her. But has this sweet empire been given to her, that she may domineer over the conscience of man, become a snare to him rather than a support, and return to him for the life which she received from him, sin and death? God punished her for her abandoned charity, by that supreme suffering without which she could not henceforth continue the race of man; and for her unacknowledged humility, by abasing still lower her condition.

"Thy desires shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Woman is compelled to look to her husband for all that she desires—here is her increased dependence; and to live under his authority—here is her dependence converted into submission.

Think not, meanwhile, that she ceases to be an "help-meet" unto him. Alas! when was this tender aid more needed? Such is the mercy of God, that the moment in which He humbles woman, is also the moment in which He confers upon her a ministry greater and more humane than ever. In order to elevate and reëstablish between the two sexes the disturbed equilibrium, it is by a virgin that He will one day give to man the longed-for Restorer, who shall destroy the works of the devil; and the first name under which He announced his Son to the world is that of the "seed" of the woman: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Thus, the relations are not essentially changed by the fall; the vocation of woman is still one of charity, and her position that of humility. Only everything has taken a more serious character; the charity has become more spiritual, exercised in a more profound humility. Ashamed of herself, and anxious to reëstablish herself, woman lives henceforth but to repair the wrong which she had done to man in heaping upon him, with the consolation which can sweeten the present bitterness of sin, the warnings which may prevent its eternal bitterness.

Another commentary borrowed from St. Paul: "I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence; For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstand-

ing she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety." Woman, says the Apostle here, was second in birth and first in sin—double reason why she should continue in an attitude of modesty, silence, and submission. Behold here, in no equivocal terms, the place of humility that we have already assigned to woman. But the Apostle would have her make it a place of honor by Christian beneficence. There is a chaste adorning which admirably befits her—that of good works ;—*good works*, these are the tresses, the gems, the jewels, the adornings which give her beauty in the eyes of God and man. Nor is this all. Woman shall procure salvation for man, at the same time that she obtains it for herself, by the childbearing of the promised seed. This salvation a woman shall give to the world, in the fullness of time, by giving birth to the Saviour ; but the woman, whoever she may be, will also give it to him in her way, who teaches him to know and love the Saviour. Here again is this mission of charity which we have assigned to woman, and which imposes upon her the obligation, we say rather which confers upon her the privilege, of consecrating herself with redoubled tenderness, not only to the consolation of suffering man, but also to the salvation of sinful man, whose attention she shall turn to Jesus Christ.

Woman is then, according to Scripture, which is to say according to God, since the creation, and more especially since the fall, a *companion* given to man to labor for his good, and above all for his spiritual good, in an attitude at once modest and submissive.

Thus Scripture instructs us ; and nature teaches the same lessons. The task assigned by God to each half of the race discovers itself in their dispositions, reveals itself in their instincts. Consult, now, yourselves, and tell me why you were so created, if not for the mission which we have recognized as yours by the Word of God.

Your place, we have said, is a place of dependence and humility. Upon this point St. Paul hesitates not to appeal to the

instinctive convictions of his readers, when, after forbidding a woman to pray or prophecy with her head uncovered, he adds: "Judge in yourselves; is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering?" These principles appear so incontestable to the Apostle, that they cannot be denied, except by an unworthy spirit of chicanery which ought not to be entertained. "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." Evidently, the long or short hair characterizes here a general and profound distinction between man and woman.

When man goeth forth from his house and gives himself to his labor until the evening, he chooses outward activity for his task, public life for his domain, and the world for his theatre. What do I say? he presents himself in the sight of the angels, and places himself in affinity with the entire universe. He cannot carry too far the name and the image of that God whom he has a mission to represent, not only upon the earth, but before the whole creation. To resist the feeling which calls him to go forth, in order to shut himself up within the narrow circle of the domestic hearth, this would be on his part weakness, forgetfulness of himself, infidelity to his mission; nothing more remains but to put a spindle into his hands and a distaff at his feet.

But it is altogether different with woman: the heart is her theatre; the domestic life her sphere; the in-door activity her work; and the long hair with which the Apostle is pleased to see her covered, is an emblem of an entire existence hidden and silent, in the bosom of which she accomplishes most faithfully, and most honorably, the primary obligations of her sex. "Woman," says a great writer of the age, "is a flower which emits not its perfume except in the shade." To retire from notice, to remain quiet, to devote herself to her dependents, to keep the house, to govern her family, *this* is her modest ambition.

If the wise man paints for us "a woman, noisy, and turbulent, appearing in the streets, whose feet abide not in the house," you will recall the woman to whom this applies.

Indeed, is not the humble sphere which we assign to woman, the one for which her whole being is predisposed and designed beforehand? That more delicate conformation, but more frail; that more rapid pulsation of her heart; that keener nervous sensibility; that exquisiteness of her organs, and even the delicacy of her features; all contribute to make her, according to the expression of Peter, "a weaker vessel," and render her constitutionally unfit for stern and unyielding cares, for affairs of state, for the labors of the cabinet, for all that yields renown in the world.

And do not her intellectual powers hold her equally distinct? It is sometimes asked whether they are equal to those of man. They are neither equal nor unequal, they are different, having been wisely adapted to a different end. For the work reserved to man, woman has faculties inferior to those of man, or rather she is not adapted to it. I speak here of the rule, not of the exceptions. That there may be among women some minds fitted for cares confined primarily to the other sex; or that there may be for an ordinary woman some situations belonging to man, which she is obliged to fill in default of his doing it, I readily grant, provided these exceptions are clearly indicated by God, or demanded by the interests of humanity. After all, in the mission of woman, humility is but the means, charity is the end, to which all must be subordinated; and why should not God, who has made exceptions of this nature in sacred history, also make them in general history? Be that as it may, I leave the exceptions to God, and to the individual conscience; and, jealous of discussing irritating, personal, or even disputed questions, I confine myself here to the rule.

Now, as a rule, that comprehensive glance into politics and science which embraces the world, that bold flight of metaphysics and of the lofty poetry which, transcending its limits, venture

into the void of thought and imagination, this is not the business of woman. *Language* even, above all ours (let us not sacrifice this useful remark to the fear of provoking a light smile), language, that simple philosophy of the people, often more profound than that of the schools, this sieve of the common reason, which, of all the bold expressions of the individual mind, allows only those to pass which respond to the good sense of all, proves this. It does not permit a woman to make herself notorious. It will not apply to her the word "man" accompanied by a feminine termination, except as an expression of ridicule or blame. The epithets taken from public life honor man, but dishonor woman in different degrees. To cite only those examples, which the delicacy of this place authorizes, endeavor to say, a "woman of science," a "great woman," a "woman of affairs," a "woman of state :" in like manner talk of a "*domestic* woman !"

But, on the contrary, while she acts within a narrow circle—narrow in extent, but vast in influence—where we exhort woman, with the Scriptures, to limit her action, she has faculties superior to those of man, or rather which belong to her alone There she finds her compensation, while she shows herself mistress of the domain, and calls into use those secret resources which I should call *admirable*, were it not that a more tender feeling inspires me towards her and God who endowed her with them : that practical insight which we might say is all the more unerring because quick ; that glance which seems to prefer to be more brief that it may be more clear ; that art of penetrating into hearts by, I know not what subtle road, to us unknown and impracticable ; that incessant omnipresence of mind and body at all points at once ; that vigilance as exact as unperceived ; those numerous and complicated expedients of the domestic administration, always at hand ; access always open to every appeal ; and that perpetual audience given to all the world ; that freedom of action and of thought in the midst of bitter pains and accumulated embarrassments ; that elasticity shall I say ? or that indefatigable weakness ; that exquisite delicacy of feeling ; that

tact so studied, if it were not instinctive ; that fidelity of perfection in little things ; that adroit industry to accomplish what she will with her fingers ; that charming grace with which she animates the sick, cheers the drooping, awakens the sleeping conscience, opens the heart long closed ; and, in fine, all the many things which we know not how to discern or to accomplish without borrowing her hands or her eyes.

But after all, to what advantage is the statement of these facts, when we can appeal to an inward sentiment, planted by the Creator in the depths of your soul, and which has preceded all personal reflections, all the announcements of others, and even the testimony of the Book of God? That chastity, that modesty, to which a woman never ceases to pretend, even after she has ceased to keep it—what is this but the proof engraven upon your heart, and transferred irresistibly to your countenance, that order, repose, honor, is found for you in an attitude of dependence and reservedness? Dependence and reserve ; the right of which never appears more inalienable than in certain delicate occasions, when the same nature is making a cruel play in efforts of one part against the other, without either obtaining a victory. What woman, conscious of this dependence, has not wished, at least sometimes, the arm of a man for support, and for a shelter the name of a man? But what woman also, in the feeling of this reserve, keeps not her wish within her own bosom, waiting till she is sought—waiting if need be till death, hastened perhaps by the inward fire with which she would rather be consumed than let it outwardly be known?

This invariable order of marriage, which assigns the initiative to man, and the appearance of which you will not allow, is not a refinement of civilization, nor even a scrupulousness of the gospel: it is a law imposed by woman, upon all times, without excepting the most barbarous, and upon all nations, without excepting the most savage. I exaggerate. I have a vague remembrance of having read, in I know not what account of a distant voyage, that a people was discovered among whom

woman takes the first step. Only, it is a country where she is degraded to the rank of the brute, and men are cannibals.

If nature is in harmony with revelation as to the *place* which becomes your sex— one of humility—it is equally so as to the *task* belonging to it—one of charity. Here again, here above all, that which is within the *Book* is confirmed by that which is within the *heart* of woman. For what is your natural inclination, if it is not *to love?* I forget not, in speaking in this way, that your sex is no more exempt than ours from the egotism which reigns in fallen humanity. But try to recollect yourself, and to withdraw into the depths of your being; penetrate beyond the ravages which sin has made there, even to that primitive ground (allow me the expression), which came forth from the hands of God, and tell me if love is not its essence and base. "More superficial than man in everything else;" a Christian thinker has said, "woman is more profound in love." We are familiar with that touching word of a woman. "Love is only an episode in the life of man, it is an entire history in the life of woman."* She might have said yet more: it is her whole being. Your origin itself, as Moses narrates it, sufficiently indicates this. That of man, formed from inanimate dust, has something more supernatural, more striking, more magnificent about it; that of woman, taken from the throbbing flesh of sleeping man, seems more intimate, more loving, more tender.

But, as regards love, it is less the *degree* than the *character* that is important. Love is the depth of your being, but what love? Think, and you will find it to be that which most predisposes you to the vocation of benevolence assigned you by the Scriptures. There are two kinds of love: the love which receives, and the love which gives; the first delights itself in the feeling which it inspires, and the sacrifices which it obtains The second satisfies itself in the sentiment which it approves, and in the sacrifices it accomplishes. These two kinds of love

* Madame De Staël.

hardly exist separate, and woman knows them both. But do I presume too much of her heart in thinking that with her the *second* predominates; and that her device, borrowed from the unselfish love of which our Saviour has given us an example, is this: "It is more blessed to give than to receive?" To be loved, I know it well, my sisters, is the joy of your heart; alas! a joy perhaps refused; but to love, to devote yourselves out of love, is the need of your soul, it is the law even of your exist ence, and a law which no one should hinder you from obeying Man also knows how to love and must love; it is in love, that St. Paul sums up all the obligations that married life imposes upon him: "Husbands love your wives," as he sums up those of woman in submission: "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands." But we are now occupied, not with the faculty of the obligation, but with the inclination.

Now love, it must be acknowledged, is less spontaneous, less disinterested in man than in woman. It is less spontaneous. Man often needs to conquer himself before he can love; woman only needs to listen and to follow her inward impulse. This is the reason, perhaps, why Scripture, which frequently commands the husband to love, refrains from enforcing it upon the wife, as if she were competent, from her nature to supply it. But above all, it is more *disinterested.* Man loves woman more for himself than for her; woman loves man less for herself than for him. Man, because he is not sufficient unto himself, loves her whom God has given to him: woman, because she feels herself impelled to love him whom God has given to her. If solitude depresses man, it is because life has no charm apart from an "helpmeet;" if woman dreads to live alone, it is because life is without an aim, unless she can be an "helpmeet" to some one. We might say of her, if I may be permitted this reference for the sake of the serious spirit in which I hazard it, We love her because she first loved us.

Moreover, what is the sentiment which has become among all nations and languages of the earth, the type of a love at once

pure, living and profound? It is woman's love, maternal love; maternal love, which exhausts life without exhausting itself, and which, after suffering everything, labors by day, and watches by night, considering itself sufficiently repaid with a caress or a smile; maternal love, celebrated as well by moralists as by poets, but whose praises, we believe, may be included in this one: that paternal love, itself, gives it the preëminence. What do I say? This same love is that of which God made choice, when he sought among all human affections an emblem for the love which he himself bears to his people. "But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." We might expect to see our Father in Heaven replying to this doubt which offends him, by making an appeal to the love of a father for his child. But no, to a mother's love he appeals; and to this mother he gives the name of *woman*, as if to give honor to the treasure of riches deposited in the heart of woman, found in the heart of the mother: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

But if such is the heart of woman, how can we fail to recognize a soil prepared expressly for this vocation of charity, which the Scriptures assign to you close to man? Love not only inspires woman with a desire to furnish this career of devotion, but it also gives her the *courage* for it. *Courage*, that is the word. Yes, at the risk of seeming to advance a paradox; I was about to say there is a kind of courage, and that which is the most necessary to do good, which impels your sex much farther than ours. I speak not of active courage; here man excels you, and ought to excel. You yield to him without regret the merit of an intrepidity which would ill become your sex: and a man of spirit has dared to say, and that without violating the truth, that "women affect fear as men do courage." I speak of passive courage, which is more constantly required than any other in the daily and humble practice of good works, and of which woman furnishes the most beautiful examples. Man

knows best how to *do*—woman, best how to *endure*. Man is more *enterprising*, woman more *patient;* man more *bold*, woman more *strong*. Would you be convinced of it? Behold her in that sorrow of sorrows reserved to her sex, at the cost of which is human life; see her and compare her with man, in solitude, in sickness, in poverty, in widowhood, in oppression, in secret martyrdom. I say designedly *secret* martyrdom; for in public martyrdom, man maintains himself in the rank of honor by the grandeur of the theatre; but, when it comes to that martyrdom cautiously and cruelly hidden in the subterranean cells of the inquisition, be assured the advantage is on the side of woman. God knew all this, when he portioned out life so that woman should have more of sufferings and less of pleasure than man; at least if we do not place in the first rank the pleasure of doing good. This pleasure woman enjoys even in suffering, and attaches herself, by suffering, to him for whom she suffers.

To a being thus formed, who dare dispute her vocation of self-sacrifice?—a vocation which her heart revealed to her ages before a line of Scripture was given to the world! Tell me not that Scripture alone holds woman to the special obligation imposed upon her to labor for man's spiritual good, by a holy charity which seeks God and eternity for him before everything else. Admirable to behold! nature has provided for it: not, it is true, sufficiently to make up for the teachings of revelation, but enough to make up for their deficiency, enough to make them perceived. For who does not know that woman's keener sensibility, her more open heart, her more sensitive conscience, her less logical mind, her finer and more delicate temperament, render her more accessible to piety, while, at the same time, her occupations being less abstruse, less continuous, less absorbing, than ours, leave her more leisure for prayer and freedom for the service of God? Who knows not also that the first conditions of success in the spiritual mission which everything contributes to mark out for her, are found less in activity, in word, in direct action, which man almost entirely appropriates to himself, than in that

penetrating influence of example, of silence, of self-forgetfulness, which is peculiar to the woman who is truly a woman ?

Yes, we declare it boldly, if Scripture is not right, if woman was not made for a mission of charity in humility, nature has missed its aim ; for woman has been called to one work and prepared for another.

Yet understand us aright : I have not entered this place to flatter woman, but to sanctify her. In saying that nature has prepared you for the duty which Scripture imposes upon you, I have not meant to say that you are, in your natural state, capable of fulfilling it. By one of those strange contradictions which the fall has introduced into our race, troubling the work of creation without destroying it, woman is at the same time prepared and *unprepared* for her vocation : prepared, inasmuch as she possesses peculiar qualities which wondrously adapt themselves to it : unprepared, inasmuch as she has other qualities which interfere with it. "It is the enemy who has done this." In the same heart where the hand of God deposited the precious germs of a life conformed to the mission of woman, Satan has secretly sowed those noxious germs which choke, or neutralize, the first. He has done more. He has sought with his infernal skill, to corrupt these healthful germs in your heart, and to gather from good seed evil fruit.

Yes, these precious resources with which the Creator has endowed you to accomplish your work, the tempter knows how to convert into obstacles to this same work. Under his mysterious and formidable influence, we see this activity degenerate into restlessness ; this vigilance into curiosity ; this tact into artifice ; this penetration into temerity ; this promptness into unsteadiness ; this gracefulness into coquetry ; this taste into studied eloquence ; this versatility into caprice ; this aptness into presumption ; this influence into intrigue ; this power into domination ; this sensitiveness into irritability ; this power of loving into jealousy ; this necessity of being useful, into a passion to please.

The two principal tendencies which we have recognized in woman, humility and charity, have been perverted. The same mental peculiarity which assigns to her the narrow circle of home as her sphere, inclines her to take small views of things, and to centre her attention upon a single point, with a strength proportioned to the narrowness of the field which she embraces; and, little accustomed to doubt either of things or of herself, impatient of contradiction for want of believing more than she can understand, she enters insensibly upon a way of haughtiness by a road which ought to lead to humility. And then this same necessity of the heart which impels her to love and to self-devotement, exposes her to the danger of self-seeking, even in self-forgetfulness, and of carrying this renunciation to extremes—hardly willing that good should be done unless she can have a hand in it; jealous of the man she would help and please without rivalry; envious of the woman who also aspires to help and please; jealous, envious—note it well—from very strength of love, but a love transformed into passion and self-will in the dread laboratory of the tempter! Then woman, whom we cheerfully believe superior to man in spiritual things, if the essence of holiness is love, and the essence of love sacrifice, applies to evil noble instincts, which might enable her to excel in goodness, and delivers herself up to sin with an *abandon*, at the same time energetic and heedless, such as man hardly understands; carrying to a greater extent than he, vain glory, egotism, avarice, intemperance, anger, hatred, cruelty, love of the world, and forgetfulness of God, as if she would justify the old adage, "the greater the height the greater the fall." The heart of woman is the richest treasure upon earth; but if it is not *God's* treasure, it becomes the treasure of the devil; and one might be tempted sometimes to think that instead of having been given by God to man to be an "helpmeet" to him, the devil formed her, saying, it is not good that man should be alone; I will make a *snare* for him.

Accuse me not of slandering woman. I no more calumniate

her now than I flattered her a moment since. I spoke then, and speak still, according to the Bible. The Scriptures, which delineate with so much complacency the graces of woman and her humble virtues, present her faults and wanderings with a vividness unusual to them, and which they seem to reserve for this subject alone. St. Paul knows no worse scourge for the church than these women whom he describes in his first Epistle to Timothy. "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." In the same book of Proverbs, which closes with a sublime description of the virtuous woman, Solomon overwhelms with the strokes of his bitter and almost satirical eloquence, not only the abandoned woman, whose murderous work no one has described with a more holy horror (ye young, ponder his maxims!) but every woman unfaithful to the mission which she has received of God. The foolish woman, "who plucketh down her house with her hands;" the brawling woman whose companionship is more grievous than "to dwell in the corner of the house-top, or in a desert land;" the vicious woman, "who is as rottenness in the bones of her husband;" the odious woman who is "one of the four things which disquiet the earth;" the fair woman without discretion, whose beauty is as "a jewel in a swine's snout;" the contentious woman, "this continual dropping in a very rainy day; whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand which betrayeth itself." This same Solomon, in old age, gathering up the remembrances of his whole life, confesses that he had vainly sought a woman after his own heart. "And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands; whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her. Behold this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one to find out the account, which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not; one man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all those have I not found."

These astonishing declarations the Bible confirms and completes by its narratives, which are so many lessons. After explaining by Eve the entrance of sin into the world, it explains to us by Adah and Zillah, Lamech the first polygamist and blasphemer; by the daughters of men ensnaring the sons of God, the corruption of the earth and the deluge; by Hagar, the faith, the charity, and peace of Abraham for a time disturbed; by the women of the house of Laban, the faithfulness of Jacob for long time concealed; by Judith and Bashemath, the profane indifference of Esau; by the revenge of an adulterous wife, the injustice of Potiphar; by the daughters of Moab, the most terrible plagues of Israel in the desert, and by the daughters of Canaan, her wickedness and idolatry after the conquest; by Delilah, the shameful humiliation of Samson; by the companion of the Levite of Ephraim, a whole tribe cut off; by Bathsheba, David ceasing to be David; by strange women, Solomon serving other gods, and gathering from fall after fall the warnings which he would at a later period give to the world; by Jezebel, wicked Ahab, perjurer and murderer; by Athaliah, the kings of Judah following in the way of the kings of Israel; by Herodias, Herod beheading John the Baptist in spite of himself; by the Jewish women, Paul and Barnabas persecuted and driven from Antioch; by the prophetic women of the Apocalypse, the corruption of the whole earth. Holy liberty of the Scriptures which declare equally the good and evil, not to exalt human nature nor to humiliate it, but to give glory to God who creates the good and repairs the evil! This heart of woman, so ardent but so passionate, so tender but so jealous, so delicate but so susceptible, so impulsive but so hasty, so sensitive but so irritable, so strong but so weak, so good but so bad, must be subdued and transformed, in order that the sap of life which inundates it, may return to its legitimate course, diffusing itself wholly in the flowers of humility and the fruits of charity!

Subdued and *transformed:* but by whom? Ah! from whom could you expect this grace but from the Son of God, who, not

content with having, through the organ of his inspired servants, restored your place and revealed your mission, has come Himself to show you the ideal of it in His life, and to open for you the way to it by His cross? Jesus living, perfect type of the gentle virtues as of the strong, is an example for woman as for man; and Jesus crucified, sole victim who expiates sin, is the only source of this holy love which, varying merely in the application, frees from sin both man and woman. But, between man and woman, if Jesus could sooner find access on the one side than on the other, would it not be on the part of woman? He, who is love; He, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" He, who satisfied himself only in privation and sacrifice; He, in fine, who took upon Him our nature in order to ascribe the highest charity in the most profound humility?

Am I mistaken, my sisters (it is for you to say), am I mistaken in thinking that there is nothing upon earth more in sympathy with Jesus Christ than the heart of woman? Superfluous question! Ah, no, I am not deceived, or your heart would deny all its instincts! The Christian faith, so truly founded in the depths of humanity that it is not wonderful only because common, adapts itself so marvellously to all the needs of your moral being, that you cannot be truly woman except upon condition of receiving the Gospel. The Christian woman is not only the best of women, but at the same time most truly a woman. O, you, then, who would accomplish the humble and benevolent mission of your sex—*beneath the cross, or never!*

Indeed, my dear sisters, the first aid which man has a right to expect from you is spiritual aid. It is little to be indebted to you for the consolation of this life of a day, if he owes not to you, so far as it is in your power, the possession of eternal life. Not only that true charity, which subordinates time to eternity, demands it of you, but justice itself, as we have shown from the Scriptures. Your sex has an original wrong to repair towards ours, and a spiritual wrong. That with which we reproach you in the fall where we have followed you, if we feel not bound to

restrict our reproaches to ourselves, is not that death which you have introduced into the world, neither that embittered life which your sympathy even cannot always alleviate—it is a much greater evil, the only real and absolute evil—*Sin*, which the first man was doubtless inexcusable in committing, but which he was beguiled to commit by woman.

Imagine Eve kneeling with Adam beside the corpse of one son murdered by the other, whom the divine curse drives far out upon the wild and solitary earth. In sight of the visible and present fruits of sin, and with the thoughts of its invisible and future results, if the tender look of Adam said not to Eve, Give me back the favor of my God! give me back my peace with myself! give me back the days of Eden, and my sweet innocence, and my holy love for the Saviour and for thee!—doubt not that SHE said all this to herself! To her, it seemed very little to heap upon him the consolations of earth, if she could not bring to him those of Heaven; and, unable to repair the wrong she had done him, she urges, she implores him to turn his weeping eyes to the Deliverer promised to repair all, to reëstablish all, and to open to the fallen but reconciled race, a second Eden more beautiful than that to which the sword of the cherubims henceforth forbade entrance. If such are the sentiments of Eve, let her be blessed, although she be Eve! With this heart, Eve approximates Mary; and in the woman who ruined the world by sin, I discover already the woman who will save it by giving to it the Saviour.

Well, now, this that she would do, do yourselves. Though no one of you has been an Eve to man, yet be each of you a Mary to him, and give him a Saviour! This, this is your task! But, if you respond not to it, refusing to pass your life in the exercise of beneficence, you shall fail of your calling; and, after having been saluted of man by the name of "good woman," "deaconess," or "sister of charity," you shall be accounted of God, "as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal!" But, how can you give the Saviour to others, if you do not possess Him in your own

heart? Women who hear me, yet again—*beneath the cross, or never!*

We say nothing of those holy women of the Old Testament, who died in faith before the coming of the Saviour, "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and embraced them:" neither of the pious Sarah nor of the modest Rebekah, nor of the tender Rachel, nor of the heroic Deborah, nor of the humble Ruth, nor of the sweet wife of Elkanah, nor of the prudent Abigail, nor of the intrepid Rizpah, nor of the retiring Shunamite. We confine ourselves to the women of the New Testament.

Beneath the cross, Mary, more touching now than at the cradle, offering herself without a murmur to the sword which pierces her soul, associates herself with the sacrifice of her son by a love more sublime than any other after that of the adorable Son, and presents to us a type of the Christian woman, who knows not how to aid and to love but in keeping her eyes fixed upon "Jesus and him crucified." Beneath the cross, Anna the prophetess, type of the faithful woman, gives glory first, in this same temple, where "she served God day and night with fastings and prayers," to Him whom the aged Simon had confessed by the Spirit, and in spite of her fourscore and four years, renews the energy and activity of youth "to speak of Him unto all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Beneath the cross, Mary of Bethany, type of the contemplative woman, eager for the one thing needful and jealous of that good part, sits now at the feet of Jesus and feeds in silence upon the word of life, and at another time, in the same silence, anoints those blessed feet with pure spikenard of great price, and wipes them with the hairs of her head, as if she could not find a token sufficiently tender of her respect and love. Beneath the cross, Martha, her sister, type of the active woman, sometimes lavishes her unwearied attentions upon a brother whom she loved, sometimes busies herself for the Saviour whom she adored, serving him in every day life, invoking His aid in bitter suffering, and blessing Him

in the joy of deliverance. Beneath the cross, the Canaanitish mother, type of the persevering woman, surpassing in faith and light those apostles whom she wearies with her cries, triumphs over the silence, refusal, disdain even, by which the Lord himself seems to contend against her invincible prayer, and, wrests from him at last, with the cure so much desired, the most brilliant homage that any child of Adam ever obtained : " O woman, great is thy faith ! be it unto thee as thou wilt." Beneath the cross, Mary Magdalene, freed from seven devils, type of the grateful woman, surpassing these same apostles in love and courage, after them at Calvary and before them at the sepulchre, is also chosen from among them all, the first to behold her Lord as He comes forth from the tomb, and charged to carry the good news of His resurrection to those who would announce it to the world. Beneath the cross, Dorcas " full of good works and alms deeds," type of the charitable woman, after a life consecrated to the relief of the poor and of the widows of Joppa, in her death shows what she was to the church by the void she left in it, and by the tears she caused to flow ; and, in the same spirit, Phebe, the deaconess of Cenchrea, " a succorer of many," and in particular of the Apostle Paul, gives birth in all succeeding times by her example to a multitude of deaconesses, clothed or not—it little signifies—with this official title before men. Beneath the cross, Priscilla, type of the servant of Jesus Christ, shares with Aquilla, her husband, many of those perils incurred to preserve to the church of the Gentiles their great missionary, or engages in those conversations by which the faith of the eloquent Apollos was enlightened and strengthened ; and, in the same spirit, Lydia hazards her life by opening her house to the apostles, which, transformed at once into a church, becomes the centre of evangelical charity in Philippi and Macedonia.

What more shall I say ? Shall I speak of Julia, and Lois, and Enodias, and Sintyche, and Mary, and Persis, and Salome, and Tryphena, and Tryphosa, and of the many women of the

Gospel, and of so many others who have followed in their steps, the Perpetuas, the Monicas, the Mary Calamys, and the Elizabeth Frys? Beneath the cross, with the Bible in hand—this Bible to which no human creature owes more than she, both in respect to the world and to Christ—beneath the cross—it is *there* that I love to see woman! Restored to God, to man, to herself, so worthy in her submission, so noble in her humility, so strong in her gentleness, gathering all the gifts she has received to consecrate them to the service of humanity with an ardor which we hardly know how to exhibit except in passion, she obliges us to confess that she who effaced our primitive holiness, is also she who now offers of it on this apostate earth, the brightest image.

O you who so well read our hearts, bear with me, because for a moment I have read yours. I have said enough, perhaps too much. You accept this mission at the hand of Jesus; you burn to fulfill it beneath the cross of Jesus. Come then, that passing from the principle to the application, I may show you how it can be accomplished in every condition; and how woman can always —daughter, wife, or mother—be unto man an "helpmeet." You have considered the *mission* of woman, contemplate her *life;* this will be the subject of a second discourse.

I ought to close here to-day; but I am unwilling to leave this place without inquiring of the men who listen to me, how they regard the mission of woman, as I have exhibited it. Many, perhaps, have hardly been able to suppress a smile of incredulity, at hearing me assign to woman a sphere of action so humble and at the same time so elevated, since it calls her to apply, as one has said, "so great principles to so small duties." This smile may be explained by two opposite reasons: one places woman above the task to which I invite her, the other below it.

There are epochs and nations before which I might feel obliged to oppose the first of these impressions, and to defend against man the dignity of woman. This duty would be necessary, not only with the Pagans, both ancient and modern, but

with many an elevated spirit, with many an eminent moralist nourished in the bosom of Christianity. To cite but one example, Kant, whom no contemporaneous philosopher has surpassed in the depth and energy of the moral sense, Kant, in his little book on "The Sentiment of the Beautiful," reserves to man the *noble virtues*, and leaves to woman only the *beautiful* virtues: by which he understands an agreeable, spontaneous virtue, exerted without effort. "Speak not to woman, says he, of duty, of obligation. Expect not from her sacrifices, nor generous victories over herself. You propose, for example, to give up part of your fortune to save a friend. Do not inform your wife of your purpose. Why check her lively gossip, and burden her bosom with a secret too weighty for it?" What sayest thou to this, Christian woman? One is ready to ask himself if the cautions of Kant with regard to woman, are much less humiliating to her than the abjectness in which paganism holds her; and to combat language so stern and so haughty, it is sufficient to recall to man in default of what he owes to woman, what he owes to himself from whom she has been taken, and to God who has taken her from him.

Yet, in the full light of Christianity, in France, and in the ideas of the day, the danger of excess is on the other side. No more is claimed for woman against my doctrine, than has been done these sixty years past; but it is claimed, not in the name of a worn-out gallantry, but in the name of systems and the prejudices of the day. One complains that I abase and sacrifice her, in assigning her a place so humble, instead of putting her on a level with man, and a path so self-denying, instead of exhorting her to live for herself. No, no: I promote, on the contrary, her true glory and best interests, because I oblige her to conform to the law of her creation, the first condition of all order and all repose for the creature. I no more degrade and sacrifice woman, in inviting her to live for charity in humility towards man, whose glory she is, than I abase and sacrifice man, who is the glory of God, in inviting him to "glorify God

in his body and spirit which are his ;" no more than I abase and sacrifice the planet, in inviting it to continue in the modest path of its orbit, sole guaranty of its safety and harmony.

There is one who abases and sacrifices woman : it is this same world, sometimes frivolous, sometimes bold, which treacherously takes up her defence against me. You abase and sacrifice her whenever you entice her, to satisfy your egotism and glorify your theories, from the path which God has marked out for her, and in which we would keep her. You have abased and sacrificed her of late, in placing her upon the pedestal and man at her feet, in your romances, in your saloons, in your plays, because instead of the mission to aid and glorify man, you have substituted that of weakening and effeminating him. You abase and sacrifice her to-day, in seeking for another emancipation than that which she has received of the Gospel, in claiming for her the rights of man ; since for the mission which she can and ought to fulfill, you substitute one in which she cannot succeed, and to which she ought not to pretend. What idea then have you of woman, if you believe her willing to exchange the humble glory of accomplishing the mission which belongs to her, for the mortifying vanity of failing in that of another—satisfied with being an incomplete man, while she might be a complete woman ; and of losing her natural and legitimate influence in the sterile pursuits of an influence factitious and usurped? Nothing more remains to her than to regret the nature which God has given her, and to indulge this regret by begging without shame from our sex the name, the dress, and the gait of man. Doubt it not, I have the heart of woman on my side ; and if any one has smiled at hearing me exhibit her mission according to God, it is not she, I answer for her. What woman worthy of her name, has ever smiled when one has appealed to her spirit of renunciation and of sacrifice ? It is bread for her hunger, it is water for her thirst. What do I say ? the woman worthy of her name ! Worthy or unworthy, every woman starts at these words of sympathy ; the heart of the worthy leaps for joy, and

the unworthy is moved with bitterness. You even, who turn away from the way which I trace for you, confess it; you think me right in the depths of your soul; and in spite of all your words, you respect her while you murmur at her, if she follows my commands rather than yours, and you scorn her while flattering her, if she follows yours rather than mine.

Be that as it may, the greater part of those who hear me, I say it boldly, not content with admitting the principles which I have attempted to develop, appreciate and admire them. Let them learn then from this example to what a degree Scripture is true. For indeed, what have I done but interrogate it before you? I confess, when I began to meditate upon the mission of woman, I was far from having upon this subject, so little studied, the precise and strong views which I entertain to-day. I had resolved to open the Bible, to listen to it, and to allow myself to be guided by it; and I have been confounded at finding there, instead of some thoughts scattered throughout forty books and nineteen centuries, an entire doctrine, developing itself from book to book and from age to age, passing from the hand of prophet to apostle, as a work planned by one workman and transmitted by him to another to complete; a doctrine, whose mission, plenitude, clearness, simplicity, brilliant in the midst of an ignorance profound and universal, excited in me a surprise which grew with meditation. For all this revealed itself to me by degrees; the place assigned to woman in Scripture, limited at the first glance, continually enlarged itself before me. We must seek for woman in Scripture; but once found, she appears there clothed with a ministry as beneficent as glorious. Her position there instructed me: I learned that such as she is in this book, she ought to be in life, great, but hidden. I say it boldly: of all religions and all systems, Scripture alone has known and understood woman. Alone, between the two opposite tendencies of the Southern and Germanic races, of antiquity and the middle ages, the one making her the slave of man, the other the arbiter of his destinies, it has spared her at the

same time, "this excess of honor and this indignity." Alone in fine, by one of those combinations of truth in which the world only sees strange contradictions, it has at once restored to her her place and held her in silence, giving to her a work as much more noble as it is more humble, as much more loving as it is self-sacrificing.

Understand then, O man, the treasure which you possess in Scripture, and question it that you may gather from it the light which it spreads upon even those subjects which it does not seem to have intended to illuminate. Interrogate it, men of thought; know if it does not retain concealed within its fertile recesses, waiting until your haughty pride shall abase itself to demand them of it, new revelations upon the plans of the Creator and the destinies of the creature, and the final solution of some of those problems which are the eternal despair of philosophy. Interrogate it, men of science; know if our old earth, which has been obliged to open its bosom most profoundly to the most conscientious investigations, to show itself in perfect agreement with this biblical cosmogony to which one had opposed it with so much assurance, has not still some other secret to say to the genius of a Cuvier in favor of the inspiration of a Moses. Interrogate it, men of letters; know if these sublime thoughts of poetry, the paintings so natural, the narrations so animated, the demonstrations so simple and so strong, that our greatest writers glory in imitating, without flattering themselves of ever equalling them, have not some salutary, some powerful regeneration in reserve for the ready, but premature, greedy, impure, still-born literature of our day. Interrogate it yourselves, men of state; know if this divine constitution which has served as a model to modern legislation and created European civilization, holds not hidden within its unopened folds some yet unknown perfection for our proud age, and if it could not teach, for example, our magistracy, renowned in all the world, that the least that it can do for this Gospel which has founded all freedom, is to allow it to be itself free.

But, if Scripture has so many lessons upon subjects which hardly seem to occupy it, what will it not have to say upon *that* subject which is to it, and which ought to be also to each of us, the one thing needful? Oh! I beg you, interrogate it upon salvation. Interrogate it concerning sin and pardon, life and death, good and evil, heaven and hell. Woe to you, if your ears are too sensitive to hear this language! Yes, interrogate it upon heaven and hell; and you will find the only place where woman can accomplish her mission, is also the only one where you can yourselves find grace, peace and life. Beneath the cross, beneath the cross, all together, one in mind, one in heart! Beneath the cross to live, beneath the cross to die, beneath the cross to meet the judgment of the great day—happy in then recognizing in him who is our judge, him who has been our Saviour!

THE LIFE OF WOMAN.

My dear Sisters:

My first address left you, I hope, convinced that your mission, according to the Bible, as well as according to nature, is one of charity and humility towards man; and resolved to accomplish this mission in Jesus Christ who alone can prepare you for it. Are we then agreed as to principles? Let us now pass to the application. Let us trace the mission of woman, in the *life* of woman: that is to say, let us see how this common mission can be realized by each of you (the Christian faith being taken for granted), according to the particular condition assigned of God.

I say, according to the condition in which God has placed you, and I insist upon this point to prevent a dangerous illusion. On hearing me exhibit the duties of woman in a position different from yours, you are tempted, perhaps, to whisper: 'Ah! if I were *thus* placed, with what devotion would I give myself to the work of loving and helping!' Believe me, my sister, you may not only accomplish, with self-devotion, your mission as a woman in your present position, but you will acknowledge it to be the situation of all others, in which you can *best* accomplish it. Else why has God assigned it—He, "who makes all things work

together for the good of those that love Him?" You answer sadly, perhaps, that it is less God who has assigned you your place than your own will, and a will badly controlled. It may be, I admit (although I distrust the heart of woman in accusing her conscience); that you have come where you are, by a way which you cannot recall without regret or without repentance. Still, your place, as it is fixed to-day, is the one in which God wishes you to-day to be; and the best one possible for you, if you accept it at His hand, in a spirit of faith and submission. With Jesus Christ there is no more a condition without resources, than a soul without hope. Such is the power of the Gospel, that it reacts upon the whole course of life, and constrains a regretted past to take its place among those "all things," that work together for the good of them who love God. It is not position, but disposition, that is of importance with God, and the surest mark of a well regulated mind, is to accept our present position, as chosen by God, to promote our spiritual development. I take, therefore, your moral physiognomy just as it is, as the daguerreotype would take your natural physiognomy. The man to whom you ought to be an "helpmeet" is a husband, a son, a father, or a man, simply as man, apart from any individual relation. Your attitude towards him may either be that of equality, of superiority, of inferiority, or of independence; it matters little to the end which I propose. The only point of importance is, that you possess a true woman's heart; I would say a heart desirous of life not for yourself but for others; first, unquestionably for the Lord, according to the general mission you share with us, and next for man, agreeably to the special mission which occupies us, in these discourses.

Accordingly, the Scripture, content with exhibiting the works of holy women, whom it offers as models to their sex, does not trouble itself to explain their social or domestic condition, obliging us often to surmise it for ourselves. That Eunice was both wife and mother, that she might give to the Apostle of the Gentiles the most useful of his co-laborers; that Priscilla, as we

may suppose, was wife but not mother, that she might follow her husband from place to place, and assist him in the service of the Gospel; that Phœbe might not have been either wife or mother, so that she might remain free to carry from church to church her devotion, and her activity; that concerning Dorcas the same thing may have been true,—this, with Scripture, was of secondary moment; it is sufficient that in them all there was a faithful heart. The same heart which rendered a Dorcas faithful in the position of Dorcas, would have made her equally faithful in the position of Phœbe, of Priscilla, or of Eunice; and the same heart which would render you unfaithful to your mission in your present position, would make you equally unfaithful in any other. But "although I thus speak, I am persuaded better things of you," my beloved sisters; and it is in this firm confidence that I would inquire with you, how you can be for man, each in her place, an "helpmeet."

I penetrate at once to the heart of my subject, and take woman in her normal position, the one in which she was found as she came forth from the hands of God, that for which she was formed, that in which she can best accomplish her peculiar work, by a loving devotion in an humble equality—*marriage*. Married woman, that which woman is called to be for man, you are called to be for *one* man. God said, speaking of your husband: "It is not good that this man should be alone; I will make an helpmeet for him:" and it is you whom He has given to him. If He did not guide you by His own hand to him, as Eve to Adam, He has done still better; He has pronounced upon your union by the voice of His servants, a word of blessing, which gives it a holy character—what do I say?—which makes of it a visible emblem of the invisible union of the Lord with His Church. Scripture alone would dare risk such a comparison, and only a Christian heart can comprehend it. But to what a height it elevates marriage with him who understands it! And with what authority it clothes this double precept, which sums up so tenderly the obligations of the husband; "Husbands, love

your wives, as Christ also loved the Church :" and so humbly those of women ; " Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

Perhaps, alas ! this word of blessing scarcely touched your heart when it was pronounced, the Lord having been the last consulted in the gift of your hand. But to-day, it regains its divine virtue, reanimated and renewed, as it were, by your faith, according to the power that we have recognized in the Gospel, to react even upon the past : and, provided you carry to-day into your married life the heart of a Christian woman, you may believe yourself truly chosen of God for your husband, and he for you, as was Eve for Adam, and Adam for Eve. As for him, I know not with what fidelity he fulfills his part of the obligation ; let him fulfill it or not, fulfill yours ; for to God we must all give account, not to man, and " each shall bear his own burden." Your mission, then, is no other than the general mission of woman, applied, and as it were concentrated, in your intercourse with your husband, and, if I dare so speak, carried to its highest perfection, by the closest and most individual of all relations. This position of humility, and this vocation of charity, which comprise the mission of woman, concentrate, gather up, upon one object : *then* shall you be what the married woman ought to be to her husband, a " helpmeet."

Freely and cheerfully assume towards your husband a humble, dependent, and submissive position. Is there here a spirit giddy enough to find in these words, food for the inexhaustible raillery with which this subject inspires the world ? Let it be understood, that I speak seriously for serious women, holily for holy women, and that I do not consider myself exempt from the duty of enforcing upon them the pure doctrine of God, because of puerile fear of exposing them to the ridicule of those who would seek in the church the curtains of the theatre, and who would judge this word, which must judge them at the last day. Yes, my sisters, whatever the sentiment or usages of society may be upon this subject, openly and frankly assume

towards your husbands a humble, dependent, submissive position. It is not *I* who demand it of you, it is God who commands you. "Wives," writes Paul to the Ephesians, "submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord;" "for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." That which he had said of man in relation to woman, speaking to the Corinthians, "The man is the head of the woman," he says here of the husband in relation to his wife: it is the same doctrine, but this doctrine specially applied, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wife see that she reverence her husband." St. Paul not only considers this submission one of the obligations of the married woman, it is the chief obligation, including every other. Sometimes he names it alone, as here: sometimes he gives it the first place, and subordinates to it all the rest. St. Peter expresses the same thing: "Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that, if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of their wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their husbands; even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

Doubt it not, the harmony and felicity of domestic life depend upon each one's holding this position. More than one household which promised well, has been disturbed by confounding duties which Scripture has carefully distinguished. We cannot with impunity depart from the divine arrangement. The trouble which others give themselves to usurp the first rank,

give yourself to avoid this usurpation, under whatever skillful precautions, under whatever tender appearances it may disguise itself. Let your husband be, next to God, the centre of your existence ; with your own name, sweetly lose in him your own glory, and your own will. Lose sight of yourself, abide in silence, avoid even the appearance of arrogance or arbitrariness. Let it be your ambition to promote his praise, or rather to be yourself his praise, not by an outward *éclat* which depends not upon you either to give or to withhold, but by a conversation so irreproachable that all husbands may propose you for an example to their wives. Realize, in short, in its full meaning, this beautiful saying of Solomon, " A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband."

Modesty is not inaction. The Scriptures give you a place so humble, only that it may confide to you a work all the more beneficent. This special humility which it recommends to you in relation to your husband, is a pledge of the special charity with which you will devote yourself to his happiness. This home in which the Apostle would see you quietly remaining, he wishes you to make by your affection, by your presence, by your good government, by the care you bestow upon your children, a sanctuary of order, peace, and happiness, in which your husband may find, after the cares of business, his sweetest repose and favorite recreation. Let him so truly find it such, that he will not think of seeking elsewhere than with you, the satisfaction which he needs to dissipate his fatigues, to alleviate his pain, to calm his agitated spirits and to restore their elasticity. Let him find there, for I refuse you no way of being useful, let him find there, hidden in the bosom of home, wise counsels, salutary inspirations, which will follow him silently into public life, and which contribute their part in controlling the words of his lips, and the deeds of his hands, by motives superior to the passions and impulses of men at large. Let him find there, in short, all that can make him happy within, together with all that can render him useful without, so that, as he crosses the

threshold of his door, to engage again in his noble labors, he shall utter to himself with gratitude towards you, and to God, who gave you to him, the touching words of Solomon, "Houses and riches are the inheritance of fathers, and a prudent wife is from the Lord." Happy if you can hear those words from his lips! But no, that is not necessary: your conscience will tell you what he thinks. It will say to you, that when with gratitude he recalls to his remembrance all the good things he has received from God—fortune, health, family—the *first* and the *last* of his earthly treasures, that which he fears most to lose, is YOU.

Yet, let not your devotion be idolatry. Love and be loved in God. The most intimate of all relations ought to be also the most holy. The Gospel would never have seen in marriage a type of Christ and the church, if it had not anticipated there a sanctifying influence, exerted by each of the pair upon the other. For what knowest thou, O wife! whether thou shalt save thy husband? These serious words denote the grand obligation of marriage; that which the Apostle calls, for reasons given in my first discourse, the special obligation of woman. This loving, this penetrating, I had almost said irresistible influence, which God has placed in your hands, woe to you, if you know how to turn it to everything but its true use, the glory of God, and the salvation of your husband! Are you happy in being united to a true disciple of Jesus Christ? Hardly need I urge you, so sweet is the duty, to be to him a constant edification, never a snare. A faithful wife, sustaining the heart and strengthening the hands of a faithful husband for the conflicts of life, is a "helpmeet" in all her glory.

But I will suppose your husband, if not a stranger to the faith, at least floating between it and the unbelief of the natural heart—disturbed by the cares of business, carried away by the temptations of public life, and influenced by those of a skeptical and fault-finding spirit. To preserve him from so many snares, to gain him forever to the faith, he needs, perhaps, only to see

it in action so near him, that he cannot overlook the reality of the facts, nor suspect the sincerity of the feeling. Do you not recognize this as your special vocation? Who but you will furnish him with this "demonstration of the spirit and of power," practical, winning, incontestable, which alone can make day within his soul? It is precisely for this kind of persuasion that you have been prepared by God, and no one else can supply your place.

Woman has not a mission as man, to preach the Saviour, and to reveal Him: she does even more; she gives birth to Him by virtue of the Holy Spirit. She gives Him, all living, all complete. Instead of declaring Him by thought and word, she communicates Him by act, by sentiment, and, if we may so speak, by inspiration. She is not to preach the Gospel to her husband, but to insinuate it into him in her actions and her slightest words, in the pure and limpid depths of her being, in all the course of domestic life, making it all pervading, without *seeming* to place it anywhere. If we rely upon you for this precious influence, Christian woman, if we see in you the most efficient auxiliaries to our preaching, we only follow the example of St. Peter, whose thought I do but this moment develop. He recommends, as we have seen, "that wives be submissive to their own husbands," but why? "that if any obey not the Word, they may also, without the Word, be won by the conversation of their wives, while they behold (literally, while they watch) your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." How is it possible to exalt higher the spiritual influence of the Christian woman? She supplies the place of the Divine Word to her husband, when her conversation, watched by means of the conjugal intimacy, reveals to him the hidden power with which the Gospel operates in her heart. A man must be truly blind, truly hardened, not to yield at last to the daily spectacle of living and true piety which he beholds in his wife, one of which he gathers fruit so sweet that one is ready to ask, which has the most to gain from it, either he for the present life, or she for the life to come?

However it may be, woman, be faithful, and await the fidelity of God. You envy the woman who hears her husband saying to himself, "a prudent wife is from the Lord." But what passes, think you, in the heart of that other woman, who some day involuntarily concealed, sees her husband fall upon his knees, exclaiming: "My God! I bless thee for having given me a faithful wife, who has led me to thyself!" Perhaps this testimony will be refused you upon earth; but how many men render it at the tomb of a wife, whom henceforth they seek in a better world! How many men at the last day, when every veil is raised, will say to their Judge, in the most profound sense of the word: It is good for me that I was not alone!

Would you see all that I have said, all that might be said upon this subject, summed up in a few lines? Read the description of a virtuous woman, guiding her son in the choice of a wife. If the general tone, or some detached features of this picture, seem to you to contrast with the Christian woman as painted in the Gospel, forget not that it is taken from the Old Testament, in which the splendor of visible things serves as an emblem of invisible, spiritual beauty. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchant's ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth, also, while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindles, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry ; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, where he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. Her children rise up, and call her blessed ; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful, and beauty vain ; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised !"

Behold a woman without humility, who, instead of being the glory of her husband, only seeks in her union with him the means of glorifying herself ; who loves to eclipse him, by whom she should desire to be eclipsed, and who finds less pleasure in his smile of approbation than in the flattery of strangers ; a woman without charity, who abandons to mercenary hands the first interests of her house, and of her children ; who even sets an example to her husband to seek his pleasures away from home ; who contradicts him with bitterness, and roughly magnifies her wrongs, supposed or real ; restless and slovenly at home, gracious and kind as soon as she crosses the threshold of her door ; a woman without piety, ready to say of her husband, as Cain of Abel, " Am I his keeper ?" or only using her influence to turn him from the Saviour, like the wife of Jehoram, whose fatal influence the Holy Spirit points out in a few words : " Jehoram walketh in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab : for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife"—a woman, in short, who compels her husband to groan in secret over the day when he was blind enough to seek her hand, until he shall measure before the tribunal of God, the whole extent of the evil she has done him for eternity !

O, ye who recognize in this picture some features of your own image, what shall I say to you ? Change your course !—become the woman acceptable to God—acceptable to the heart of man !

Change you may, for to this is needful neither youth, nor beauty, nor superior mind : it is only needful that you become a Christian woman !

But since, at this day, woman enters not as Eve, at birth, into marriage, let us take her at that point of her development where she commences to prepare herself for her future work, and address ourselves to the young girl. Understand well, my young sister, what determines the character of your condition and its privileges. The race to be run is yet all before you ; and while those who have preceded you cannot look back without seeing much to deplore, to repair, to efface if it were possible, let nothing prevent you from reserving for your mission as woman, under the blessing of God, all that you have of time, resources, life. Under the blessing of God, I have said ; for, without Him, what are our most sincere resolutions, and, above all, the resolutions of a young girl ? Nowhere is the spirit more willing, nowhere is the flesh more weak. The wind plays not more capriciously with the dust, than the tempter with the projects of fidelity which you form for the future. Alas ! how many women at your age, formed theirs, whose actual life responds so little to your ideal—still less to theirs ! Far be it from me, my dear daughter, to discourage your generous promises ; I would only that you carry them to the foot of the cross, and shelter your weakness under the strength of the Omnipotent God. Then, I will deliver myself without fear, to the pleasure of contemplating in you the living type of hope ; of hope, this incomparable grace of youth, exalted all the more in the young girl, by her greater influence, and by her hidden destiny. For, who ever thought of personifying hope, otherwise than under the traits of a young girl ?

In this uncertain expectation, it is asked, if the young girl should prepare herself for the general mission of humanity, or for the special mission of the wife. Authors who have treated the subject of the education of girls, are divided upon this point. We say, relying upon Scripture, either answer is incomplete

Yes, without doubt, the young daughter should be prepared for the general mission of humanity, which is to glorify God, who created us in His image ; but this preparation is not sufficient ; for, independently of the general mission which she shares with man, woman has yet a special mission, which is the subject of these discourses. Yes, the young girl must be prepared for the special mission of the wife, which is to be an "helpmeet" to one man in particular, since, according to the ordinary course of things, she will be married. But this preparation should not be exclusive ; for every woman is not called to marriage, and a special education in this sense is in danger of missing its aim. Here is the secret of reconciling all. Together with the general mission of humanity, and the special mission of the wife, there is for woman a third mission, special as to the first, general as to the second, peculiar to woman, and common to all women—that which I have explained from the Scriptures, which Moses reveals in calling woman an "helpmeet" to man, and Paul, in calling her "the glory of man." I would prepare the young girl for this mission, without losing sight either of the supreme necessity of glorifying God, or the natural eventuality of marriage. She will then be prepared for both, by the intermediate preparation which we claim, if she is what she ought to be.

Let young girls look carefully to the spirit of this preparation, and let their mothers look to it for them. Since a woman's highest excellence, next to the fear of God, is in the humble virtues of domestic life, the first care of a daughter, after that given to her soul, should be to cultivate these inward and hidden virtues. I hardly need say to her, abstain from all that has the appearance of evil ; carefully avoid pictures, plays, readings, which can bring the slightest stain upon the purity of your heart. But it will be less superfluous perhaps to say to her : Mistrast the maxims of an egotistical and sensual age, which, seeking in a young girl merely an agreeable plaything to divert the melancholy which devours it, decks her in haste with brilliant charms, instead of adorning her by slow degress with useful

graces. A vain brilliancy, a precocious development, knowledge badly directed, the memory burdened without regard to the intellect, gifts of imagination placed in the first rank ; this is the tinsel which the education of the day prefers for our daughters, to the pure gold of an instruction, solid, beneficent, precious in the sight of God and man. This tinsel, I firmly believe, my young sisters, is meant by the world for itself, whereas there should be pure gold for you and for your house.

I do not exclude you from any serious study, because I would not deny you any legitimate mode of influence. Give yourself without scruple to the culture of the imagination, of literature, or art, which, in developing an essential and too much neglected side of the human mind, will be an aid to the beneficial influence you wish to exercise, by adding to your capacity to please. Only put everything in its right place, and arrange your subjects of study according to the demands of your mission. Above all, be yourselves, be women, and never sacrifice to the false tastes of man the distinctive occupations of your sex. Tell me not of a young girl, who can win the applauses of all, at a concert, but who knows not how to hold a needle, or to make herself useful at home ! Lastly, I may include all my exhortations in one : let the heart be well governed, and let it control the life. By the Word of God and prayer, nourish within you this humility, this charity, which are the peculiar graces of woman, and the first conditions of her mission. The world itself could teach you, in default of the gospel and your own conscience, that if humility and charity were banished from the earth, they ought to find a last refuge in the heart of a young girl. As for me, if I love to see woman beneath the cross, with Bible in hand, a young girl, above all, I love to contemplate in this attitude, preparing herself for a future career known only to God, but which can be faithfully accomplished, whatever it may be, only beneath the cross, with Bible in hand.

One word more, for you and your families, but a word without development, upon a matter as grave as it is delicate. Let it be

understood, that deciding resolutely to marry only in the Lord, you will give your hand to none but a moral, religious man, capable of entering with you into the Christian idea of marriage. By this entirely passive resolution, not only ill-assorted unions might be prevented, but also a happy reaction would be exerted upon the manners and principles of society, and men would find in modest girls the most efficient "helpmeets," to say nothing of the most powerful reformers.

Yet you need not await this most uncertain event, to be a "helpmeet" unto man. You can be such now, believing that the accomplishment of your present task is the best guaranty for that of the future. Your actual position demands, it is true, a peculiar reserve. With one, it is the humble equality of the wife, with another, the respectful inferiority of the daughter who has hardly passed the period of childhood: but this reserve permits, it even encourages, a kind of useful activity proper to your age. True humility prompts true charity; and the flowers which hide beneath the grass their delicate colors, are those which emit the most fragrant perfume. How many ways there are for you to do good, without going beyond the domestic circle! You have a school, a parish ready for you, in the young children of the family, whose education already you share with their mother. Contrary to the common law of prophets, you are called to exercise your humble ministry "in your own country, and your own house." Do you realize all you can be to this young brother, over whom your advantage of some years gives you a kind of influence of your own, whose confidence in you is all the more free, because unrestrained by deference? Like that loving sister, who watches beside the floating cradle confided to the Nile, when prudence permits not a mother to reveal herself: who, on account of her youth is employed without exciting suspicion, to give to Moses a faithful mother for nurse at the moment when God gives him an unfaithful princess for a mother, and who then disappears from the scene, content with having helped a brother forward into the world, whose name, one day, must

eclipse her own—has God placed you beside your brother, to give him such help as he can find nowhere else, and which he would be least suspected of receiving. Beside him, yesterday, you taught him to read, or to-day, you inspire him with unquenchable ardor in his fatiguing studies ; and to-morrow, you counsel him in his choice of a profession, or in that of a wife.

But those for whom you can do most, are those to whom, next to God, you owe all. Who can supply to the father and mother that daughter's place, who, timid and silent with strangers, is at home full of that sweetness and fire, which, at this age, are the marvellous combinations of nature ? Who will supply to them her light and caressing hands, her prompt and subtle spirit, her tender and submissive affection, her firm and simple piety, to lighten the burden of years, to soothe their pains, to dissipate their anxieties, to anticipate their wishes, to gladden their hearts, to comfort their souls, as if she longed to give back to them the life she received from them ? This young daughter that you see hiding herself behind her mother, blushing at the attention she attracts in spite of herself, do you not know, that she is more than the ornament of the house ? She is its joy, its life, its pillar, or if you prefer a term borrowed from Scripture, she is its corner stone ; "that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." Coming from the Scripture, so exact even in its boldest poetry, you understand what is meant by this corner stone. Alas ! you will know *some day*, perhaps, the profound truth of this image, as you see the void made in the house by the removal of this loved child ! You will understand, then, what were her love, her devotion, her piety to those who shall surround her, and shed tears over her loss. But no, you will not realize it ; her family alone will understand it—let us retire—sympathy itself may be intrusive—let us not intermeddle with the secret of their grief, we, who have never penetrated into that of their joy !

This is not all. There are good works for which I permit the young daughter to leave the domestic sanctuary, and, if need be,

to lay aside the reserve even, which her age prescribes to her. Would you instruct the ignorant, relieve the poor, exhort the sick, visit the widow and the fatherless? Go, my daughter; go, without hesitation, and may the Lord go with you! I love to see the young girl, who is ever ready to assist her mother in the labors of housekeeping, to offer her arm to her aged father, or to read the Bible with her brothers and sisters, turn from this charity within to charity without, and bestow upon the unhappy, attentions which they receive with double gratitude, surprised to see her reserve for such uses, graces which so many others think themselves permitted to devote to the world and its pleasures. Permitted! it may be, if we wish it; but, permitted or not, a life of pleasure seems to you, without doubt, less desirable, less conformed to the mission of woman, than that which I have proposed to you. Or, indeed, do you recognize rather the "helpmeet" in that other young girl, who prefers the shameful horrors of a daughter of Herodias, to the modest glory of a Rebecca; who loves better to be the idol of saloons than the treasure of the family, who finds more delight in loading herself, at great expense, with rare ornaments, than to be herself as God made her, the ornament of her home; who consumes herself in fruitless efforts to attract the notice of men, and to outstrip her companions, I might say her rivals (accuse me not of exaggeration); who abandons herself to vanities, and casts into the void this plenteous sap of life which has been given her for a day, and which to-morrow she will seek, and no longer find. Poor child, willing to bury herself all alive in the cold joys of the present life! Sad victim, day after day, night after night, sacrificed to the folly of the world, by the vanity of her own heart! Some morning, at break of day, two young ladies suddenly meet in the silent street. One hastens from the ball to her bed, that she may snatch some tardy repose after her pleasures; the other, to the death-bed of one who calls for her in all haste, unable to depart in peace, he says, without the presence of his good angel! Young ladies, choose!

We have contemplated woman before marriage, let us contemplate her now after marriage, intrusted with that precious fruit which Scripture calls "a heritage from the Lord:" let us turn to the wife now become a mother. Towards this son, whom God has given you, Christian mother, you occupy a position not of inferiority, as the daughter, nor of equality as the wife; but of *superiority*, and that, too, a superiority which does not exclude the renunciation peculiar to the mission of woman. It is not good that the child should be alone, and God, who has given him to you, has given to him, at the same time, in you, a "helpmeet." Even the tender cares which his physical development claims, are dear to your heart. Anxious, by nourishing him from your own life, to prolong the pride of communicating to him being, you will not, without a necessity thrice demonstrated, deprive him of the treasures with which nature has enriched you, through him, and for him, nor deprive yourself of the holy pleasure of being an undisputed mother. Yet, a graver interest preoccupies me at this time; the aid which you owe before all others to this little one, is education, the birth-giving of the soul, which follows by right that of the body, and which no one should dispute with you.

That ineffable joy with which you welcome your son, what is it but the natural joy of Eve, who called her first-born Cain, that is to say, "acquisition," because "she had gotten a man from the Lord?" Or, indeed, is it the more noble joy signified by Christ, in these words, whose striking truth so often has made you start: "A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." Maternity is a ministry, and the first condition of a faithful ministry is disinterestedness. Say not, here is my son, born to me, born of me, and for me; but say, here is a man born into the world, for the good of the world. "What manner of child shall this be?" demand earth, heaven, and hell, bending, as if suspended, in boundless expectation over

the cradle of this frail creature, whose life has just disengaged itself from yours! The response—I say it not forgetting the divine operation, which is exerted through human instrumentality—the response depends, before everything else, upon the training; and the training depends, before everything else, upon the mother.

It has been often remarked, that the decisive moment in education is the point of departure. In the earliest years is implanted that strong bias which gives shape to the entire life. But the first years belong to the mother. Paganism took them from her; but Jesus Christ restored them to her. Grudge her not these beginnings. If they are too important for strangers, they are also too delicate and too exacting for a father. Aptness, freedom of mind, time, patience, are wanting to us. But all this, God has given to the mother. No one else so clearly discerns the nature of her son, the strength and weakness of his character, the allowance to be made for his temperament, the degree of severity and indulgence suited to his disposition, and the precautions needed to make him plastic without spoiling him. No other one possesses so truly the art of awakening his curiosity, of stimulating his ardor, of gaining his attention, of keeping his eyes open, and of initiating him by degrees in the practical knowledge of things, which, more living than that of books, has also a larger part in the development of the life. No other has a hand gentle, and at the same time *strong* enough, to give to the rising plant its early bias—a hand at once too strong to be resisted, and too tender to awaken a wish to resist it—and which controls all his future growth.

The greatest moral power in the world is that exercised by a mother over her child. Demand not from her a systematic account of it. She acts from inspiration, more than from calculation, and perhaps never says to herself what I say to you. God is with her in her work, and here is the secret. She appears to you perhaps, to guess at it; but let her alone. She understands it better than you, and will accomplish more by guessing,

than you by your reasonings and calculations. Rely upon God, and the maternal instinct. "As a general rule, to which at least I have hardly seen exceptions," says a contemporaneous writer, "superior men, are all the children of their mother." * Contemplate that man, strong in heart, with intrepid voice, whose indomitable courage in turn braves the wrath of a prince and controls the popular wave, and whose determined will, equally invincible by obstacles and fatigue, seems anxious to justify the proud maxim: "Man can do what he will." You give, perhaps, the honor of his energy to nature. But learn that there appeared in his childhood a spirit so irresolute, a character so vacillating, that every one said: "He will never be a man." A *woman* has made him a *man!* and this woman is the same who brought him into the world. She alone has never despaired concerning him. Sustained by love, guided by instinct, she has discovered beneath his weakness, hidden virtues, which she labored tenderly, humbly, slowly to develop. She has formed him to perseverance, by combats wisely graduated, in which her faithful sympathy has wished to share in everything, but the honor of victory.

She has revealed him to himself, she has restored him to society. Then, when this son, upon his death-bed, recalls the good permitted him to accomplish for his people and generation, *to his mother*, next to God, he gives the glory; and the last name upon his lips, in his delirium, is the same, which he attempted to pronounce fifty years before, in the lispings of his infantile days!

I may be permitted to add, without overlooking the value of our instruction, that maternal education is rendered doubly necessary by the tendency of our public instruction. We often hear the complaint that with precious resources, which it places at the disposal of all classes, it presents, to say the least, grievous deficiencies, it may be for the heart, about which it concerns itself too little, it may be also for the mind, with which it shows itself too exclusively occupied. It not only nourishes self love

* Michelet.

by an immoderate use of the principle of emulation, and does nothing to inculcate a holy respect for duty, but that which it does with so much skill, labor and sacrifice for the culture of the mind itself, is at least incomplete. The faculties which depend upon memory are sharpened by perpetual exercise, whilst those that depend upon reflection, even more important than the first, remain comparatively without employment. By too entirely occupying every moment of the pupil, by absorbing too much his ardor in a laborious preparation, we take from his mind the leisure, the elasticity, the activity, requisite to assimilate to itself what it receives. We accustom him to content himself with borrowed knowledge, into which his personality does not enter. Then the development of thought and character ceases, or a wrong direction is given to it. The flower of originality, as charming as vigorous, which nature refuses to no one, falls before yielding its fruit. We might say that a low equality has come upon all minds, and the man disappears in the child, because the child disappears in the scholar. For an evil so grave, I know no remedy but the counterpoise of family life, and domestic education, which alone can penetrate into the windings of the individual mind, and give it its proper direction. But I depend on the mother to save this family life, so threatened to-day by common life ; and this domestic education, I rely upon her to undertake. Urge her not to send away her child : let him remain a long while with her. When the time arrives for him to enter into contact with public life, she may be allowed still to interpose to maintain the rights of the heart, of the person, of the mind ; that is to say, of the *man*. Are you jealous of the too feminine influence she exercises ? Know that this influence, formidable if alone, is an indispensable complement of ours. Man has not all that is necessary to form the mind of man, because this mind has a feminine element. I so name this tender, penetrating, instinctive faculty, which seizes, or shall I say *divines* the truth, in opposition to that calm reason which gives an account of things, and to that strong will which gives an account

of itself. In this sense it can be said with truth, "no man of genius was ever exempt from a feminine development." Hesitate not: place public instruction under the safeguard of the family, but the family presided over by the mother: it is the surest means of securing advantages to your son, as well as of saving him from perils.

Let us never forget in education, as in life, that "one thing is needful;" this one thing needful, is the result of the mother's success. Too often, alas! in the holy work of guiding her son to the Saviour, she has no one with her; happy indeed, if all the world is not against her. But if alone, let her take courage; it is here above all that God is with her, and He is sufficient for her. Are we speaking of a young child? This son beloved, but loved in the Lord, with whom she humbles herself each day at the feet of the Saviour, whom she teaches him to seek in his earliest thoughts, and name in his earliest words—she holds in a measure his soul in her hands. Alone in the world, she knows the ways by which to go in depositing the fruitful germs of salutary truth, instilled with so much love, implanted so profoundly, linked so strongly to the natural instincts (here learn the empire of her own image!) that neither storms without, nor storms within, shall be able to uproot them. Believe me, nothing is more irresistible to man, nor at once more indestructible in man, than these early impressions left by a pious mother, and shielded by the vague and simple charm of youthful remembrances. A son will twice doubt the mind of his father before he doubts once the heart of his mother.

Or, are we speaking of the age, when, no longer a child, and not yet a man, a son escapes insensibly from the watchful care of his mother, inspiring her with new solicitude? By a faithful use of her past influence, she has gained the confidence of this son, and this confidence to-day is an assurance for the future. In those tender disclosures which she has made a habit with him, and a need to him, she reads his heart to its depths; and a heart to whose depths we read, is almost always one of which we are master

Passion speaks, perhaps ; he is about to yield : but he must tell his mother—impossible ; or he must conceal it from her—more impossible still ; and the temptation is overcome. At length the time arrives for the last embrace, prelude of a separation, perhaps, eternal . . . Christian mother, what dost thou fear ? Prepared during so many years upon the humble stocks of the family, *launch, since God wills it*, launch thy vessel upon the uncertain sea ! Let thy weeping eye follow it, even to the most distant limits of the horizon, and then, when thou shalt see it tossing upon the farthest wave, ready to disappear—disappearing—disappeared—offer thy prayer, committing thy treasure to Him who holds the winds and the waves in His hands, and who loves—more than *thou* lovest ! Thou hast been faithful from the beginning ; *He* will be faithful unto the end. Go on ; He will not forget the promise, which seems to have been given expressly for thee. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Happy foresight, justifying a still happier experience. If it is true, that the greater part of distinguished men are the sons of their mothers, it is, above all, true of religious men. Scripture history, the history of the church, and contemporaneous history, agree in attesting it : we say rather in leaving it to be discovered ; for it is necessary to seek for the mother to discover her, behind this son whose name eclipses her own in the memory of man. But this is all a Christian mothers asks. If she has saved her son, she has accomplished her mission as a woman ; and if she has saved him without revealing herself, she has doubly accomplished it. Listen to the Bible. What is the object of the short preface placed at the head of the life of Samuel, if it is not to explain this holy man of God, this giant in prayer, this first link in the chain of prophets, this great reformer of the state and of religion, by the faith, the vow, the fidelity, and the songs of Anna, his mother ? How this recital atones for the brevity with which the Bible elsewhere explains in a similar manner, a Moses, a David, a Timothy ! and how it gives us the key to the apparent

minuteness with which it names, in passing, the mothers of the kings of Judah! Open the annals of the church. Who hears the name of Augustine, that living light, twice almost extinguished, but delivered in turn from lust and heresy, to glorify God before the most distant posterity, without recognizing with him in this double deliverance, next to God, the hand of the loving, humble, patient Monica? But learn that Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianyen, and many others who have followed in their steps, each had their Monica, of whom we forget to inform ourselves, ungrateful as we are, even while tasting with delight the fruit of that which she sowed.

But we need not extend our glance so far: look around you. Study the ways of God, and you will find that the greater part of the servants of Jesus Christ, in whom our generation glories, are indebted to a mother for the first gleams of their piety. Not long since, in a pastoral conference, where were assembled one hundred and twenty American pastors, united in a common faith, each one was invited to relate the human cause to which he attributed, under the divine blessing, the change of his heart. Do you know many gave the honor to their mother? Out of one hundred and twenty, more than one hundred!

At another time, a mother equally faithful, seems not to have succeeded as well; her son has wandered far from the path which she traced out for him, A mother, after all, mother though she be, is not God. But the greater the wandering of this prodigal son, the more we admire the maternal power to which he closes his ear, without being able to free his conscience, and which may (what do we know?) triumph at last over his resistance, long after the voice and prayers of his mother have become silent in death. Disregard the piety of a mother—that is possible, but *forget* it—never, no, never! A good man was hastening towards a church where religious service for sailors was being held. Opposite the church, at the door of an inn, he saw seated an aged sailor, with a rude and decided air, who, with folded arms, and a cigar in his mouth, looked with

indifference, or else with disdain, upon those of his comrades who repaired to public worship. "My friend," said the stranger, approaching him, "come with us into the church." "No," answered the sailor roughly. His manner would have given this response to the stranger, who added, with mildness, "you appear to have seen hard times. Have you still a mother?" The sailor, raising his head, fixed his eyes upon the stranger, and remained silent. "Ah! well, my friend! if your good mother was here, what counsel, think you, would *she* give?" Wiping away, with the back of his hand, a tear which he vainly attempted to hide, the old man arose, and, with a choking voice, said, "I will go."

Mothers, mothers, understand your power! Feel your responsibility! Happy the child who has a good mother! Happy *your* son, if he has a good mother!

But, understand me; I waste not this name upon every one, who simply loves her child. A loving mother is one thing, and there are such even among the heathen; a good mother, according to God, is quite another thing. In our day, alas! the history of some men's relations with their mother is soon told. All this intellectual, moral, spiritual development is to them unknown. From her bosom, the poor child, (if it is not under the roof of a salaried mother) drops into mercenary hands, within the paternal mansion, until its age permits it to go forth from home to college, from college to the higher institutions, from the higher institutions to the army; and, returning from the army, if he returns at all, what will this mother, to whom he was almost always a stranger, be to him now, *but* a stranger? —stranger to his future course—stranger to his marriage—stranger to the education of his children. Oh, mother, who still hast a son to rear, awake! And thou, mother, who hast *thus* reared one, repent!

Yes, repent, but despair not. The word despair is not Christian. The eleventh-hour laborer may not only be admitted, he may even be favored. You can become a "helpmeet" to your

son, and educing, by the grace of God, good from evil, experience the truth which contains in it the germ, the whole Gospel, "When I am weak, then am I strong." One work completed, another commences. Too late for that of education, another remains to you, for which it is never too late, since weight of years imposes it upon you. You reign no longer by authority over children, who have become men; but you can exercise over them, a dominion of love and respect, which their maturity will honor. Last link between past and future generations, frail and precious vestige of that which has been, and which will be no more, vigilant depository of the family traditions—you form a venerable centre, around which group themselves, with silent anxiety, many families whom your departure will soon disperse. In your presence, the depths of their hearts are stirred by many thoughts, many interests, many passions perhaps; but all is restrained by the common feeling which you inspire, and each vies with the other in efforts and sacrifices to maintain the peace of your last days. Your experience, your white hairs, your past services, your present infirmities, a vague fear of not finding you in your place to-morrow, gain for you every heart. Noble and useful position which God has prepared for you! Words of power, received as the experience of life, as the warnings of death, almost as the inspirations of heaven! Happy the mother, who faithfully completes a career faithfully begun! But happy the mother, also, who longs with a holy jealousy, to finish well that which she began badly; who knows how to turn to the good of her children her own unfaithfulness. "The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home; good, that the Word of God be not blasphemed." The secret of this beneficent influence, is in the inward life. "The widow who liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth; but she that is a widow, indeed, and desolate, trusteth in

God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day."

If I mistake not, my dear sisters, before this picture which I have drawn of the Christian wife and mother, the heart of one woman sinks within her, and a silent tear moistens her eye. This woman, perhaps from circumstances, perhaps from choice, perhaps from a generous sacrifice, or from religious fidelity, has become neither wife nor mother. Understand it well; it is but a holy jealousy that troubles her this moment. Exclusively preoccupied with the sublime mission of her sex, she would accept without difficulty, all of the incompleteness, according to opinion, according to the heart, and to the law of Providence, which her position offers. But having no one to whom to devote herself, she is compelled to restrain within her own bosom the thirst for sacrifice which consumes her, without profiting any one; to this she cannot consent. My sister, my noble sister, shall the delicacy of my subject close my lips? It signifies not that it is delicate, provided I accomplish my mission of the ministry of Jesus Christ, in aiding you to accomplish yours as a woman. You are, I love to tell you, in a complete illusion. Your position, viewed in the light of God, and the interest of your mission, is a privileged one, if you can so regard it. Believe the Apostle, writing to the Corinthians: "There is difference, also, between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cared for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely towards his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not; let them marry. Nevertheless, he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin:

doeth well. So then, he that giveth her in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage, doeth better." Strange words, it must be confessed, and which it has been easy to misconstrue to the profit of erroneous views of celibacy, established at a favorite time in the church. Without doubt, the language of Paul must be explained by the particular circumstances of the time in which he wrote; but we may boldly declare that he would never have expressed himself in this manner, if he had considered your position as of inferior importance to that of the wife, in the service of the Lord, and in the accomplishment of your mission. He chose himself an analogous position, not only to prove to the churches his disinterestedness, and to relieve them of the burden of his support, but to give himself "unto the Word and prayer," with greater freedom; freedom of time, of action, of mind, and, in short, of heart.

These reasons are worth as much to you as to the apostles, and the last has a special value for woman: it is this, above all, which I desire to make you understand. There is in the heart of woman, a power of loving, to which man cannot attain. In the natural position, which is conjugal life, this power expands and satisfies itself in the family, upon a husband and children. In single life, it finds light by another road, and throws itself into one or the other of these two ways. In the first place, it turns within, and concentrates itself in selfishness; from whence springs an egotism without measure or scruple. Probably in this class of single women we find the most humiliating examples of self-love, of curiosity, of idleness, of avarice, of worldliness, and altogether of petty existence, miserably consumed in trifling pleasures. Or, in the other case, it turns without, diffusing itself in love to God, and to our neighbor, and impels woman to devote herself to the good of humanity, as a wife or mother lives for her family. Then, by an apparent contradiction, charity gains at the same time in breadth and depth; in breadth, because it extends beyond the domestic circle, in depth because it assumes the ardor of a necessity, and the enthusiasm of personal feeling,

saying nothing of a tinge of sweet melancholy, which well becomes it, and which also, in its way, stimulates it. In this way holy and Christian women are found ; or, as I might say, the daughters of holiness and charity, among whom we must seek for the most accomplished models of Christian benevolence ; who, weary of earth, impatient of heaven, by the simplicity of their zeal, by the purity of their renunciation, by the abundance of their good works, seem perpetually occupied in filling an immense void which God has made in their hearts for the good of humanity. Their ranks are open to you ; enter them, following in the footsteps of the many women who have chosen this position in order to be more useful to the world. Enter them, and give yourself no repose until you have learnt to see in your isolation a merciful privilege.

God has prepared before you, according to the Apostle, a path of good works : to walk in it you only need a heart truly consecrated, not with that selfish devotion which seeks self even in sacrifice, but with that disinterested devotion, which sacrifices, if necessary, even itself. "Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread." Look first around you, and see if your family relations do not offer you the opportunities you desire. We find sometimes very near us, the thing which we seek at the ends of the earth. In default of a father and mother who have left you, you have perhaps a young brother at the outset of life, to whom you can be a friend and mother ; or a sister, it may be, ready to sink under the envied burden of a family, if she finds not in you that complement of strength, of time, of health, of light, which God has so plainly given her in you. Your heart demands a family. Well now, here is one. It is not yours ; I know it is not all that you desire ; but it is that which God has chosen for you, my sister, providing, at the same time, for the good of others, by your charitable labors, and for your own by your self-renunciation. No, when I demand of the whole earth, a type of the charity, most useful, most pure, most Christian, I find nowhere those conditions better fulfilled than in the

good aunt, who, with a marvellous forgetfulness of herself, accepts the fatigues and the cares of maternity, without its ineffable compensations: mother, more than mother perhaps, when it is a question of serving and supporting; putting herself out of sight, when it is one of reaping and enjoying; sad, but with a heavenly sadness which translates itself into love and devotion.

What if an engagement of family binds you; extend your view; seek a family in all who need you, in relieving the unfortunate, in founding or sustaining charitable institutions, in aiding a faithful minister in his labors, in all the good works for which God seems expressly to have reserved your liberty. Or, embrace if you can, a still wider field: embrace the world, if you will provided it is in love. Renew in your person, the holy office of deaconness; prepare yourself for it, if necessary, in these schools which a vigilant and ingenious charity opens to-day to pious females; go, another Phebe, carry your services now to Rome, now to Cenchrea, sometimes in a hospital, sometimes in a family, sometimes in a church, wherever they shall be claimed, even if it be in behalf of some heathen nation, shut up under other skies. In fine, fulfill so well your mission, that at the hour of death, each of you will congratulate herself upon the happy isolation which permitted so much devotion; so fulfill it, that in the affectionate regrets which follow to the tomb your mortal remains, none shall discover whether you were wife, or mother, sister or aunt, parent or stranger, because they see it not in your sacrifices!

If, instead of taking the difference of natural positions as the central point of my development, I had taken that of social positions, I could equally have shown you woman, finding by turn in a condition of equality, of superiority, or of inferiority, special resources for accomplishing the mission of her sex. The subject must be left to your personal reflections. Yet there is a class of women, that I cannot permit to leave this place, without some words of encouragement, because I believe they need them, and have a right to them.

Christian woman, whom God has placed in the humble rank of *servants*, the levelling spirit of this age, which disturbs all inferior conditions, has not, I hope, so carried you away that you cannot accept the trials of yours ;—I say more, that you cannot appreciate its compensations and advantages. But perhaps you say to yourself : this beautiful mission of woman is for all the world except me ! What can a poor servant do, who lives by dependence upon others ? Listen to my answer. You can accomplish the mission of your sex—I say not *in spite* of this dependence,—but even *by its help*. Many women have forced things to create for themselves a way of obedience, thus deceiving themselves in substituting *their* wisdom for that of *God*. But their error resulted from a profound instinct of woman, to which, in you, God has taken care to give satisfaction in choosing for you the lowest place. This is the place, which our Saviour prepared ; "Who took upon Him the form of a servant," and "Who came"—I love to repeat it—"to minister, and not to be ministered unto." Was it an obstacle to his work ? Was it not its support, its condition, its life ? It will be all that for you, believe it well, if you enter into the Spirit of your Master.

Hardly could I name one who contributes more to the order, the prosperity, the happiness of a house, than the truly Christian servant ; above all to day, when the treasure is so rare, alas ! and so imperfectly appreciated when found. This holy woman, "obedient to her master with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart as unto Christ ; not with eye-service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ;" anxious to please them, unwilling to oppose their wishes, espousing their interests, and faithful even in trifles ; at home accommodating herself to their infirmities, and concealing them when abroad—good and noble woman—with the veil of her charity ; elevating, in fine, her condition to the height of her sentiments—free by faith, a servant by love—what a gift of God for a family ! Appreciate this blessing,

you who have received it, without waiting for God to reveal its value to you, by removing her from you and filling her place with one of those servants, so numerous, full of the world, and of themselves ; ill at ease, and, as in a prison, when at home—in constant conspiracy with those without, like a traitor in a besieged place, scarcely restrained by a vigilance more fatiguing to exercise than to submit to ; as careful of her person in public as she is negligent of it in private ; spreading through the town domestic secrets ; curious, gossiping, crabbed, and, in fine, caring but for her own interests, and awaiting only an offer of the slightest advantage to break a yoke which is painful to bear.

Thus we see her in the present life—but in *another*? Ah ! beware of thinking the spiritual mission of woman is denied you. In the humble sphere assigned you, you can do more than many others for the service of the Gospel, provided you are willing to serve it as a woman, gently, silently, endeavoring before all else, "to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour" in all things, by a conversation without reproach. Besides, influence ascends more than it descends : many a one resists that of his superiors, against which he is on his guard, and yields to that of his subordinates, of which he is all the while unconscious. Hence the power of the enfranchised in Rome. Hence, in Proverbs, the influence of the wise servant who ruleth over a son that causeth shame, and who shall have his part of the inheritance among his brethren. Spiritual influence follows the one law of all influences, which gain in power as they are most concealed : being that which is most humbling to the natural pride. Go on, your spiritual opportunity is great, and in proportion to it, your responsibility. I tell you that there is a retreat into which you alone can penetrate ; there is a conversion which God has reserved for you, and which no one can accomplish better than you ; there is a proud heart which yields neither to a mother, wife, nor daughter, but which will be constrained to lay down its arms before the obscure fidelity of a servant ; he last" here being "first."

When Peter, escaping from prison, knocked at the door of the house where the disciples were assembled, Rhoda, the servant, was permitted to run before him, and announce the news of his deliverance. It is a beautiful privilege to open the door to an apostle ; and still more beautiful to open it, when the Lord knocks ; He enters willingly by these private doors, which you only can unclose to Him. But the children, above all, the children, this hope of the future, do you consider the influence which God has given you over their minds? How often has it been remarked that children, instead of following the example of their parents, more readily form their accents, their language, their habits, from servants ; it may be, because of more frequent intercourse, or less apparent efforts, and which least provoke resistance. The heart of man is thus made. This power, it only remains that you use for the interests of the Gospel. You dispute with the faithful mother the spiritual development of this child which you carry in your arms, or which you lead to walk : over the ordinary mother you have an advantage !

With works such as these to do, are you jealous of still greater works reserved for others ? Then, finally, the greatness comes from God : and it depends upon Him to change the little things which you have accomplished into great ones, even in the eyes of the world. When it became necessary to put the powerful and vain-glorious Naaman in communication with the prophet, who would at the same time both heal him of his leprosy, and reveal to him the true and living God, a little Israelitish maiden is employed, whom the soldiers of the Syrian captain had taken prisoner, and whom he had given to his wife for a slave. Poor child ! she hardly imagined when she struggled in the arms of her savage conquerors, that she would yet be a great blessing to the Syrian, and that the time would come when she would be cited as an oracle in the court of the king : " Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel." Was not this circumstance narrated for your encouragement?

Do you remember how Illyricum received the Gospel in the first age of the church? By a Christian woman, who was there sold as a slave. I say all this not to excite your vanity, or to be a snare to you, but to awaken in you a holy jealousy, to lead you to appreciate the position in which God has placed you. Yes, my dear sisters, conform yourselves to His views; not a word of complaint or regret; no ambitious dreams of change, but a fidelity full of joy, to your peculiar mission, and a heart which envies one nothing but a more active charity and a more profound humility!

Woman, in fine, whoever thou art, and wherever thou art, take to thy heart this word, "I will make for him an helpmeet," and determine, without more delay, to justify the definition which God has given of thee.

Useless woman, who groanest under the thought that thou hast, even to this day, burdened the earth, as a tree without fruit; that thou mightest be taken away from it, without leaving any greater void than is made in the water by the sword which we plunge into it and quickly withdraw from it; thou, who hast hitherto lived without knowing from whence thou camest, or whither thou goest, here is discovered the vague object after which thou longest without knowing it. Here is a work for thee, to which, living, thou mayest consecrate thyself, and dying, will be able to say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." Enter to-day, even, according to thy position—whose apparent difficulties are real resources—upon this life, at once so humble and so glorious, so full of meaning, and so devoted, for which God destined thee in the day when he said, "I will make an helpmeet for him," and which Christ restored to thee when He gave Himself for us, "that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Worldly woman, who hast consumed thy most beautiful years in cares, innocent, I grant, but frivolous and unworthy of thee, infatuating and infatuated, using for the interests of thy pride,

a power which God has confided to thee for his glory and the good of his people, here, in place of this brilliant existence, but brilliant as a meteor, resounding, but resounding as an empty vessel, here is a life glorious and full, in which, in a word, thou wilt find, in finding thyself, the satisfaction which thou hast vainly (is it not true ?) demanded of the world. Take off thine heart from vanity, and give it to charity ! Believe me, leave this artificial life, which supplants and abridges the real ; reserve for thy home the labors of the day and the repose of the night ; count as lost the day in which thou hast not done some good ; enjoy, in short, the happiness of being a *woman*—and thou wilt know that if made to be to man a " helpmeet," it is better to be useful to him, than to be flattered by him ; to serve him, than to fascinate him !

Isolated woman, from whom God, who renders not an account of his doings, has taken away with the husband of thy youth, the attraction, the aim, the life of thy life—and thou, also, widow of a living man, forsaken wife, whom the husband of thy youth, after a short joy given and received, has overwhelmed with grief by his coldness, if not by his unfaithfulness ; tender plant, torn from the earth, that it may be transplanted into a better soil, but which has been cast upon the road-side, abandoned to the scorching fire of the sun ; thou, whom the Lord has chosen as a type of the most ineffable griefs, take courage—thy consolation is found ! If the sweetness of being loved has been taken from thee, allow not thyself to be despoiled of the privilege of loving, of loving first, loving last, loving always, of loving notwithstanding all. Follow in the steps of Jesus, who was despised as thou art, but was never cold and unjust as one is with thee. Be still unto him who has wronged thee, a " helpmeet." Drink without a murmur the cup which his cruel hand offers thee each day ; oppose his ingratitude only with an increased submission and devotion. Be silent, humble thyself. Go on ; this heart which thou seekest will be restored to thee, conquered by thy love ! But should it persist even to the last in its injustice,

should it—O horrible thought!—finish its murderous work by raising some day against thee a threatening hand, yield, still blessing him—accomplish even to the end thy mission as a woman, rely upon God whom thou lovest, and who loves thee in order to make thee a partaker of His glory through his cross!

And thou, whom I hesitate to name, fallen woman, charity will not permit me to leave thee without a response—without a response, for I hear thy heart interrogating me. Fallen woman, —"let no one trouble this woman!" a sinner who repents is a spectacle, if not worthy of *you*, yet worthy of *angels!* As for me, if I could despise her tears and disdain her repentance, I could not believe myself a disciple of Him who said to the penitent sinner; "Thy faith hath saved thee—go in peace!" My sister, my poor sister, yes, this is also for thee! Believe not thyself alone excluded from this appeal, and beware of despairing of thyself. Thy heart burns within thee to accomplish this mission of woman, to become to man what God made thee, a "helpmeet." Thou canst—yes, thou canst; none can better than thou, if none feels a deeper thirst for grace! Knowest thou that many of the holy women who shine in the first ranks among the benefactresses of humanity upon the earth, and among the redeemed of the Lord in heaven—a Rahab, a Mary Magdalene, a penitent sinner, commenced as thou hast? Well, then, finish as they did! Humblest among the humble, the most charitable of the charitable, remember the past, only for the good of the future. Permit none to recall the past, except to admire in thy change both the divine compassion, and the vocation of woman! And upon thy guilty head, all covered to my eyes by the blood of Jesus Christ, let the blessing of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, descend with mine!

But we, my brethren, witnesses of this new baptism of woman, have we gathered naught from it but a vain spectacle? It concerns our interests, our dearest interests; but also our *conscience*. If woman owes to man the aid of a "helpmeet," does man owe

nothing to her? If woman has her influence over us, have we no influence over her? This duty of acknowledgment, of reciprocity, how have we fulfilled it? We said, in our first discourse, that sin came to us by woman: alas! have we not returned it to her, returned it with usury! If woman has disregarded her mission, who has taught her to disregard it? If woman has been idolized, who has placed her upon the shameful pedestal? If woman has been degraded in paganism, in poligamy, in licentiousness, who has degraded her? In fine, if one should give you this problem to resolve, which of the two has done to the other the greatest wrong—man to woman, or woman to man? what would be your answer?—Question sad as difficult! in the room of which I would propose to you, on the contrary, another: Which of the two will henceforth do the other the most good? Do you see her who, in meditation before God, is seeking to know henceforth how she can be to us a "helpmeet?" Let us meditate, for her sake, upon the same problem at the feet of the same Saviour! Most truly are the principles the same, the applications alone vary. Humility, charity—if we abandon them to woman, ah! what will remain to us ourselves? Humility, charity—was the man Christ Jesus anything else? With a godly jealousy, one of the other, let the humility and charity of the woman aid the man; let the humility and charity of the man aid the woman, looking forward to the time when, beneath purer heavens and upon a regenerated earth, the humility and charity of the elect of God, in whom all earthly difference shall be forgotten, shall glorify from age to age this Saviour God, doubly our Father, having created us in a day of love and saved us in a day of grace!

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